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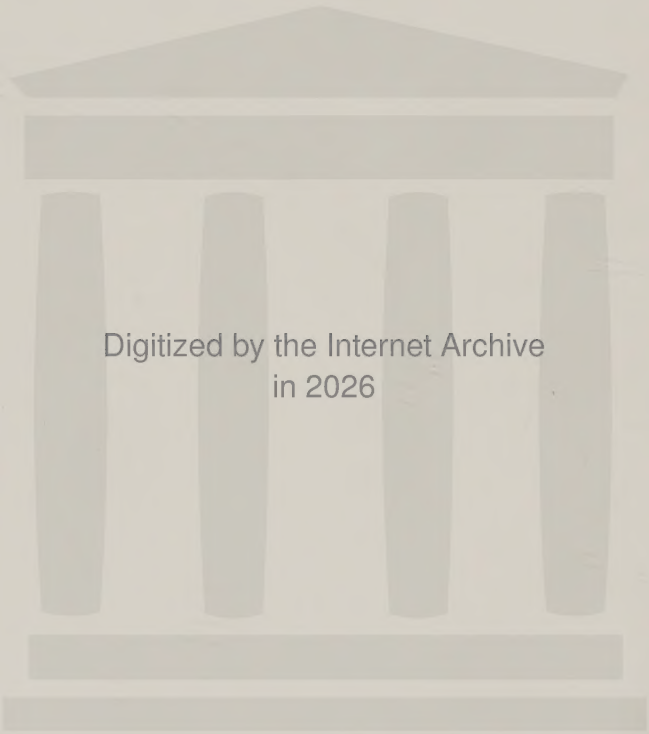
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THE GOLDEN AGE OF ITALIAN MUSIC

"Music" attributed to Juste de Gand.
(By permission of the Director of the National Gallery, London.)
Violante, daughter of Federico of Urbino, and her husband, Costanzo Sforza.

The Golden Age
of
ITALIAN MUSIC

by

GRACE O'BRIEN

With 15 Illustrations

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PREFACE

MUSIC played an important part in the social life of Italy from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. The budding art was cultivated at all the Renaissance courts, as well as in Venice and Rome, which became the great centres during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

In this book, the author describes the gradual flowering of the art of music against the background of the brilliant intellectual and social life of those days, when music permeated the whole cultural atmosphere of Italy.

Given the vastness of the subject, it has only been possible to sketch in the broadest outlines the important developments in the domain of vocal and instrumental music which were to spread from Italy all over Europe.

The Author gratefully acknowledges the valuable suggestions of the late Monsignor Raffaele Casimiri, the eminent musicologist and Choir Director of the Lateran Basilica.

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PART I

DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

(a) General

ITALY, for so many centuries a source of artistic inspiration to the whole civilized world, is associated in our minds with a definite ideal of beauty. Her very name conjures up visions of picturesque towns, set in lovely landscapes, whose churches, palaces and museums are veritable treasure-houses of art.

But, while universal homage is still paid to the architecture, painting and sculpture of Italy, we are nowadays apt to overlook the significance of her achievements in the domain of music during those sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when Italy was the scene of the first glorious blossoming of the art, when her composers created such a variety of musical forms, when her craftsmen fashioned so many types of instruments.

Music, the flower of late medieval culture, was fostered to some extent in all civilized countries during the Middle Ages. But only in Italy can we trace, century by century, a continuous development, leading to a splendid maturity: that Golden Age during which Italy, supreme in music, taught and inspired the whole world.

No country was so well fitted to be the cradle of a new art as the home of ancient Latin civilization. For, though Italy had been overrun for centuries by hordes of barbarians; though Huns, Vandals, Goths and Lombards, had destroyed nearly every trace of Roman civilization, yet something of the ancient spirit survived. And Rome retained her prestige, in the eyes of all mankind, both as the centre of classical culture, and as the capital of the Christian world.

Italy remained the prey, now of the Barbarians, now of the Byzantine Emperors, until she found a protector in Charlemagne whose crowning as Emperor of the West, in the year 800, raised Rome once more to a position of political significance.

The era of feudalism which followed did not foster intellectual growth. But a new civilizing influence, that of the monastic schools, had been at work since the early sixth century. St. Benedict's famous monastery at Monte Cassino, that founded by the Irishman, St. Columbanus, at Bobbio, and the schools established by Charlemagne in various parts of Italy, fanned the dying flame of learning, and gradually revived the almost forgotten arts of civilization in the devastated land.

At the end of the eleventh century, a fresh impetus was given by the Crusades which, though purely religious in aim, profondly influenced intellectual and material conditions in general. The incidental increase in trade brought great prosperity to Italy; and the new spirit of enterprise engendered a desire for greater liberty, especially in the larger Italian towns.

The strength of the new movement swept away the old systems; feudalism was soon replaced by the rule of the Communes which completely changed the face of the social and political life of Italy.

Whilst Rome, rising once more from her ashes, erected churches, monasteries and palaces with the remains of her classical buildings, the other Italian towns, safely entrenched behind fortified walls, became centres of commercial activity whose importance went on increasing from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries. As the citizens grew rich, each Commune became ambitious to demonstrate its importance by the splendour of its buildings. First, a cathedral was erected in the centre of the town, and near it a communal palace; whilst, round about, the merchants built noble palaces for themselves and their families.

All over Italy, the new currents were felt. The towns of Tuscany were alive and stirring, and above all, Florence, with her far-flung trade, was fast becoming one of the great commercial centres of Europe.

Nor were the Maritime Republics behindhand. They, too, tended to express their wealth and strength in terms of architecture. On her islands in the Adriatic, Venice floated churches and palaces of exquisitely wrought marble. And all those cities that were later to become famous centres of music: Naples, Bologna, Padua, Milan, now expended their creative inspiration and artistic genius on this essential art, till it flourished with a lavishness and beauty that amaze us still.

All the plastic arts played their part in enhancing the beauty of medieval Italy. Sculpture, hand in hand with architecture, adorned doorways, windows, walls, with ornamental traceries and figures. Painting, with its harmonies of line and colour, gave an added richness to cathedral and palace walls. The formal Byzantine art, out of keeping with the vital spirit of the thirteenth century, gave way to a new style. Cimabue, Simone Martini, Giotto, began to introduce touches of reality, to suggest life and movement in their paintings. A vigorous, living, art was created and developed by the generations of artists who represented the great schools of Italian painting.

But, though the churches resounded to the solemn liturgical chant; secular, human, music was still silent.

Another art of sounds was to precede it. When Dante chose the speech of Tuscany rather than the classical Latin to be the medium of his great work; when Petrarch and Boccaccio followed his example, the Italian language, vehicle of national life and thought, was born. With its wealth of beautiful sounds, it was destined to inspire the new art of Italian music, soon to embark on its artistic adventures.

(b) Musical

Sources of Art Music.

In Italy, as elsewhere, secular art-music had a twofold origin. One source of its inspiration was the spontaneous utterance of folksong, some form of

which must have been used in very remote times by such an instinctively musical race as the Italians.

The second source of secular music was the ritual church chant which, from Rome, spread throughout the Christian world. Its influence, traceable in the ancient music of most countries, was naturally potent in Italy where, from early Christian days, the people had been familiar with the liturgical song. This ritual music, akin to the chants which had been sung for centuries in Greek temple or Jewish synagogue, had adopted the theoretical musical system of the Greeks, a heritage which it handed on to secular art.

Whilst the songs of the people were a spontaneous form of musical expression neither guided nor hampered by rules, ecclesiastical music was strictly regulated in order that it should conform to the spirit of the liturgy. Solemnity and uniformity were essential; consequently innovations were apt to be discouraged.

The principal rules which were drawn up during the course of the centuries with a view to preserving the traditional spirit of the church chant, left their mark on profane music in its early stages. For instance, in the year 200, chromatic progressions were banned from ecclesiastical music, with the result that medieval secular music remained for centuries purely diatonic.

The earliest organized church music was the metrical chant which St. Ambrose introduced in the fourth century.[1] Its general use ended when Pope St. Gregory the Great reformed church music at the close of the sixth century. His reforms, which were to influence the development of both religious and secular music for centuries to come, dealt with a number of technical points. He increased the number of church modes from four to eight, thus enlarging melodic and modulatory possibilities. He gave the notes of the scale the names of the first seven letters of the alphabet—a practice originally adopted by the Greeks, but which had lapsed for some centuries. He replaced the metrical chant by the plain chant, still in use to-day, which follows the free rhythm and accent of prose language. He caused all the liturgical hymns and chants to be collected in an antiphonarium, the use of which spread to all Christian countries; the notes were indicated by signs known as Neumes—generally supposed to have been derived from Greek accent marks—which centuries later developed into the notation we use to-day.

The limited musical science of the Greeks, as expounded by the Roman writer, Boethius, in the beginning of the sixth century, was dutifully accepted by medieval musicians, and for centuries kept a stranglehold on the art; for theorists were loth to sanction any new developments that could not be explained by classical laws.

Appropriately enough, it was Flanders which, a few centuries later, was to lead the way in polyphonic music, that produced, in the tenth century, one of the first theoretical works. This was the Monk Hucbald's treatise on the primitive part-music in fourths and fifths, which was known to

[1] It is still to be heard in St. Ambrose's diocese of Milan.

medieval musicians as *organum*. Hucbald was also a pioneer in notation, and showed the way towards the stave and clef systems.

These matters were already of international interest. The next important advance occurred a century later, and was due to an Italian, Guido of Arezzo, who further developed the stave and clef systems, and introduced the solfège names of the notes. Then in the twelfth, or late eleventh century, Franco of Cologne (or of Liége or Paris)[1] tabulated the note values and fixed their shape: he also formulated the rules for an improved version of the *organum*, to be known as *discantus*.

Thus music progressed steadily, taking each century some big step forward; receiving the impetus now from Flanders, now from France, now from Italy; until, in the fourteenth century, northern France and Flanders witnessed the remarkable flowering of contrapuntal music that hastened the development of the art and influenced it profoundly for all time.

Meanwhile, in Italy, music followed a development of its own which, from the very beginning, displayed distinctive qualities. The preponderating influence of Flemish music during the fifteenth century was chiefly technical in its import: it enriched the Italian art with new formulae, without obliterating its national characteristics.

[1] Both the dates and the identity of this musician have been frequently challenged.

CHAPTER I

INFLUENCE OF THE TROUBADOURS. MUSIC IN DANTE'S TIME

IT was in Provence, in the early twelfth century, when the first Crusades had stimulated men's imaginations, that secular music began to assume definite shape, to create a type quite distinct in its inspiration from either church or folk-music. The earliest examples of art music were the songs in which the troubadours praised the beauty of ladies and the chivalrous deeds of knights; both the words and the melodies being composed by these poet-musicians who sang their songs to the accompaniment of lute, rebec or giga.

The new music soon spread to Italy, especially to the northern provinces. The Marquises of Monferrato, in Piedmont, who were famous Crusaders and closely in touch with Provençal life, welcomed to their court such celebrated troubadours as Pierra Vidal, Bernard de Ventadour and Rambaldo di Vaquieras.

The Italians rapidly acquired the new art and, in their turn, went to display their skill at the Provençal courts. Another great Italian family, the d'Este, were connected with this early musical development; for, during the war of the Albigenses, many of the French troubadours who fled from Provence took refuge at their court at Ferrara: a town which was later to be famous in the annals of Italian music.

The few hundred troubadour melodies that are to be found in old manuscripts are none of them of Italian origin. Yet, that the art was practised in many parts of the country is evident from the names of the Italian troubadours: Alberto Malaspina of Lombardy, Rambertino Bulavelli of Bologna, Bonifacio Calvo of Genoa, Bartolo Zorzo of Venice, and Sordello of Mantua; whilst, amongst the singers of southern Italy, figured the Emperor Frederick the Second and his sons, and Pier della Vigna.

The fact that the poem was considered more important than the music, and that the Italian troubadours wrote in the foreign Provençal—the Italian language not yet having achieved a literary status—no doubt hampered their inspiration. It is probable that they contented themselves with inventing melodies to the verses of the Provençal poets, of which so many have been preserved.

Sordello, the most famous of the Italian troubadours, is represented in the "Canzoniere Provenzale" (Ambrosian Library, Milan, R.71. Sup.) by his "Lamentation on the death of Gregorio de Montelungo." Unfortunately there is no music to the poem, although this interesting fourteenth-

century manuscript contains eighty-one troubadour melodies.[1] Yet Sordello —immortalized by Dante who, in the *Divina Commedia*, makes him greet Virgil with the cry: "Mantuan, I am thy countryman, Sordello!"—was celebrated in his day as "singer, musician and virtuoso."

Although many of the melodies are missing from the old MSS, music was inseparable from this poetry. Such troubadours as could not play their own accompaniments employed minstrels, known as *giullari*, the descendants of an ancient musical caste. The really expert troubadour was, however, expected to be familiar with all the known instruments. Girant de Calanson, a thirteenth-century writer on the troubadour art, says that the poet should know how to play the tambour, cymbals, mandola, guitar, harp and lute; how to tune that early type of fiddle, the giga, (evidently no mean feat); and how to imitate the song of birds.

While the courtly troubadours were singing the praises of noble ladies, another type of song was growing up in Italy, a form which sprang from Umbrian soil and which, though purely religious in origin, was to influence secular music. At the dawn of the thirteenth century, St. Francis of Assisi, who called himself the "Troubadour of Christ," began to write his *Laude Spirituali*: hymns which the people sang during the processions that were such a feature of that age of religious awakening. The *Laude* introduced new elements, both poetical and musical. For St. Francis wrote his poems in the vernacular—an important detail; and the music which was inspired by the simple, fervent words was, like them, a spontaneous expression of religious feeling. Technically speaking, these airs, which followed the rhythm and structure of the poems, differed from the traditional church music in that they were melodic in line and symmetrical in phrasing. The *Laude* were later to receive the addition of a simple harmony and to inspire secular songs of a kindred type.

Another writer of *Laude* was Fra Jacopone da Todi, one of the outstanding figures in early Italian literature. This famous poet threw himself with such zeal into the movement inaugurated by St. Francis that, adopting the rôle of religious minstrel (sacro giullare), he wandered through the towns of Umbria singing his sacred songs in the Piazze and market-places.

We do not know what sort of accompaniment the troubadour or giullare played to these songs on his lute or guitar, for the chord or arpeggio accompaniment of the harmonic period was not yet in use. But such music as the early minstrels produced was evidently considered a very effective addition to song.

[1] The melodies transcribed in this MS are reminiscent of plain chant; but they move more freely, and are usually embellished with many ornamental notes and vocalises. The music is written in square black notes on a red stave on which the F or C clef (or both) are indicated. The stave is generally of six or eight lines; but the number is evidently arbitrary. The scribe has found the two top lines of the stave a convenient frame for the ornamental lettering in which each troubadour's name is inscribed; the first being "Folchet d'Marseia."

That Dante was of this opinion, is evident from the lines:

"E come a buon cantar buon citarista[1]
Fa seguitar lo guizzo della corda,
In che più di piacer lo canto acquista." (Par. xx, 143).

The troubadour period was ending when Dante wrote his *Divina Commedia*. It was possibly to a type of music similar to the troubadour songs that some verses of Dante's were set in his lifetime by his friend Casella—a fact to which the poet alludes. In his journey through Purgatory, Dante describes his meeting with Casella, when he begs the musician to sing this song for him once more:

"Ed io: 'se nuova legge non ti toglie[2]
memoria o uso all'amorosa canto
che mi solea quetar tutte mie voglie
di ciò ti piaccia consolare alquanto
l'anima mia. . . .'
'Amor che nella mente mi ragiona'
comminciò egli allor si dolcemente
che la dolcezza ancor dentro mi suona." (Purg. II, 106)

According to his biographer, Boccaccio, Dante was in his youth very fond of music and a friend of all the good singers and instrumentalists of his day. Various allusions to music in the *Divina Commedia* show that the poet was familiar with such developments as the art had then reached. He describes how the fingers, by touching the strings at the fret-board of the lute, produce different notes: "E come suono al collo della cetra prende sua forma"; whilst the tones of the bagpipes are "at the wind-hole modulate and tuned"; again, he speaks of "choral voices that in solemn chant with organ mingle."[3]

Dante possibly owed his knowledge of musical instruments to his friendship with Belacqua, a well-known Florentine maker of lutes and guitars, whom the poet also encounters in Purgatory soon after his meeting with Casella.

Not only was the birth of the Italian literary language in itself an important factor in the development of secular music; but, in addition, the

[1] "And as skilled hand to one who sings aright
Adjusts the harmonious tremor of his strings,
So that the song acquires the more delight." (Plumptree)

[2] "If new law taketh not from thee
Memory or custom of love-tuned song
That whilom all my cares had power to assuage
Please thee therewith a little to console my spirit . . .
'Love that discourses in my thoughts', he then
Began with such soft accents that within
The sweetness thrills me yet." (Cary)

[3] Mgr. Raffaele Casimiri held that Dante refers here, not to the organ, but to the "ars organandi," the singing of parts in *Discantus* to a Gregorian melody; the organ not having been used to accompany voices until the sixteenth century. (R. Casimiri "Quando a cantar con organi si stea" Psalterium 1924.)

principal creators of this literature, Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, were personally interested in the new art which, as one gathers from their writings, was already a favourite pastime with cultured Italians.

Petrarch, many of whose poems were set to music by early Italian composers, shows an intense feeling for music. In his sonnets, there are several allusions to Laura's soft, sweet singing: "Il cantar che nell'anima si sente." (Singing that touches the heart.) And his dialogue between "Joy and Reason" contains a chapter on "The Charm of Song" ("Della dolcezza del Canto"), in which Joy expresses the delight it takes in singing and in the music of the lyre and other stringed instruments.

Most musical are the lines in an epistle to one of his friends, in which Petrarch praises the playing of a French lutenist, and incidentally shows his own susceptibility to music:

"Quand egli suona è pace,[1]
Sotto sue dita il gaudio
Fiorisce quasi, e al dolce
Incanto della musica
Ogni tristezza tace."

In his will, Petrarch left his favourite lute to his friend, the musician Maestro Bambasi di Ferrara, "in order that he may play it, not for the vain pleasure of a fleeting world, but to the glory of the Eternal God."

The poets of medieval days opened up new horizons to music. The earliest art songs borrowed their melodic elements from church and folk-music, but soon they acquired bolder, more original outlines; and composers gradually discovered the art of weaving together strands of melody in harmonious combinations.

The experiments in part-music that were being made at this time in Flanders, France, England and Italy showed practical musicians that it was necessary to enlarge the existing harmonic system, which still classed the intervals of the third and sixth among the dissonances to be avoided when possible. The theoretical aspect of the art of music aroused considerable interest in medieval Italy, and it was an Italian, Marchettus of Padua, who first recognized the third as a consonance, in a treatise he wrote at the end of the thirteenth century and which he, very appropriately, named the "Lucidarium." For, as Gevaert says, this was "a great light" which suddenly shone forth "after two hundred years of groping in darkness."

Whilst the old university town of Padua continued during the fourteenth century to concern itself with scientific music, worldly prosperous Florence, a bustling centre of political and industrial activity, was more interested in the practical side of the art and enlivened its leisure with song and instrumental music.

[1] "When he plays, all is peace.
At the touch of his fingers,
Joy seems to flower,
And under the magic spell of music,
Sadness ceases."

CHAPTER II

MUSIC IN FLORENCE IN THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

THE flourishing musical life of Florence in the fourteenth century was without parallel in the whole of Italy. It was unrivalled even by Rome; for the Papal court had its headquarters at Avignon during the greater part of that century.

One of the most important of medieval Italian towns, Florence had at an early period freed itself from the domination of the Tuscan Feudal Lords; and, by the eleventh century, the wealthy, independent merchant-city was one of the most progressive towns in Europe.

While her merchants made Florence rich, and her diarists made her name and history famous, her writers of "Novelle": Boccaccio, Giovanni da Prato, Giovanni Fiorentino—whose tales chronicle in fanciful guise the social customs of that day—left pen-pictures of Florentine fourteenth-century life which show that music played an important rôle at all festive gatherings.

Boccaccio's *Decameron* gives details concerning the type of music the Florentines indulged in. As in many countries, at that period, dancing and singing often went hand in hand, the song serving as an accompaniment. Such songs were known as *ballate*, *canzone a ballo*, or *carole*. In the last-named, the dancers formed a chain, and sang as they wound in and out to the changing figures and steps. Even the Blessed Spirits in Dante's *Paradise* moved to such rhythms: "E'en thus their carols weaving variously" ("Così quelle carole differentamente danzando").

Such dance-songs, which usually consisted of a solo with choral refrain, were greatly in favour; and a link with troubadour music may be found in the fact that the Florentines accentuated the strong beat of the music by stamping, as did the Provençals when dancing the *Stampita*.

Boccaccio also describes his gay fellow-citizens as singing to the lute and viol. Other instruments he mentions are: the psalterium, the rebec (an early type of fiddle), the bagpipes and the cembalo (here a tambourin with bells). Every Novella ends with music; and at the last day's gathering, a real personage, the musician Minuccio, sings for the merrymakers, accompanying himself on the viol.

Another work, by a contemporary of Boccaccio's, in which there are several allusions to music, is Giovanni da Prato's *Il Paradiso degli Alberti*. The group of Florentine intellectuals who met at Antonio degli Alberti's Villa Paradiso, outside Florence, held serious discussions on the science of music; a science which then concerned itself with the harmony of the spheres as well as with the laws of acoustics; and which saw a metaphysical significance even in the mathematical side of the art.

But the Paradiso group were not too learned to enjoy dancing and singing just as much as their more frivolous fellow-citizens. As in the *Decameron*, a real musician is introduced. One of the members of this intellectual society was the most famous Italian musician of the fourteenth century, the blind organist, Francesco Landini, who is described as playing at the "Paradiso" on several occasions.

It seems incredible that music produced on such a rudimentary instrument as the organ of that day should "ravish the senses." Yet such, we are told, was the effect of Francesco's music on the frequenters of the "Paradiso." According to the chronicler, when the blind musician asked for his little organ and began to play, "there was none present but felt his heart ready to burst for sheer joy at the sweetness of the harmonies." The very birds in the garden ceased singing to listen to Francesco; and when he stopped playing, they sang more jubilantly than ever.

No other European town displayed such a keen interest in music at this period. In spite of political unrest, and in spite of the recurring horrors of the plague, Florence continued to sing and make music with undiminished enthusiasm throughout the fourteenth century.

This prolonged artistic activity, in such a favourable environment, led, inevitably, to interesting developments: Florence became the centre of a new musical movement. The important transformation of the art of music which took place during the fourteenth century and which is embodied in "Mensural," or measured notation, became known as "Ars Nova" (the New Art); and according to the famous German musicologist, Riemann, Florence was "the cradle of the Ars Nova."

The new musical ideals found expression in little part-songs, secular and religious, which possess many distinctive and interesting traits. As compared to contemporary French and Flemish music, the old Florentine songs show a much more highly developed sense of rhythm and melody, attributable, no doubt, to the influence of Italian folk-music. Some slight variety of style is also already apparent in this music; and the germ of an important form is to be found in the *Caccia* or *Hunt Song*, a simple two-part canon, which was then in great favour in Florence. (As the canon made its appearance almost simultaneously in Italy, France and England, it is difficult to say where it actually originated, but the credit is now generally given to England.)

This early Italian "school" did not survive the Flemish musical invasion of the following century. Yet, short-lived though it was, this sudden blossoming of Italian music was a phenomenon of real artistic significance.

Fortunately, a considerable number of songs by these early composers have been handed down in four or five contemporary MSS now preserved in Italy, France and England. One of the Italian collections, which is unique of its kind—being probably the most beautiful book of secular music in existence—is amongst the most precious treasures of the Medicean Library at Florence. (Pal. 87.) It is known as the *Squarcialupi Song-Book*, after the famous Florentine organist of the following century to whom it belonged.

All the composers whose songs are transcribed in it lived in the fourteenth century, and most of them were Tuscans.

The *Squarcialupi* MS is a large quarto volume bound in brown tooled leather, and fastened with ancient brass and leather clasps. The pages, of thick parchment, are for the most part in perfect condition; the colours of the beautiful miniatures and illuminations that adorn the book are nearly as fresh as when the anonymous artist painted them over five hundred years ago.

The work of the illuminator is more mature and finished than that of the composers whose songs are here enshrined; yet their primitive music is of the greatest artistic and historical interest. The book contains between three and four hundred songs written to Italian words, most of the songs being in three or four parts. The majority are settings of poems by Petrarch, Sacchetti, and Boccaccio; but, in some cases, the composer wrote both words and music.

The MS opens with a two-part song by Giovanni de Florentia (John of Florence), to a little pastoral poem of Sachetti's: "Agnel son bianco" (I am a white lamb). Framed in the bold initial letter A, is a full-length miniature portrait of the composer. Against a background of coppery gold, Giovanni is seated, in a gown of hyacinth-blue and faded rose-red; he holds on his knee a book of music, and points to the words of this song.

The border of the page is richly illuminated with a conventional design of flowers and animals. The notes and the words of the little song enclosed in this charming framework are exquisitely transcribed. Indeed, every page of the MS is most decorative.

The stave, ruled in red, is of six lines; the notes are black: square or diamond-shaped; there are no bar-lines. The time-signatures are of the Italian type: the letter *d* indicating the duodenarian time division (corresponding to 12/2 time).

Several of Giovanni's songs are given, one of the best being the charming madrigal, *The White Peacock*. Another, the words of which he evidently wrote himself, is biographical: it informs us that the composer had for a time abandoned "the beloved science" to become a lawyer, but the charm of music had lured him back irresistibly.[1]

Even in those far-off days, musicians seem to have found it necessary to insist that shouting was not singing. In his song *Useletto Selvaggio*, Jacopo di Bononia begins by praising the soft notes of a bird and then proceeds to point his moral: "Per gridar forte non si canta bene, ma con soav' e dolce melodia si fa bel canto, e ciò vuol maestria." (Loud shouting is not good singing; *bel canto* requires a sweet melodious tone, and that needs skill.)

A miniature portrait of each composer adorns the first page devoted to his music. Several wear the habit of a monastic order; and one, Magister

[1] "O tu cara scienza mia, Musica! O dolce melodia con vaghi canti!
. . . Or son procuratore e avvocato, Pero ritorno a te, musica cara."
(O beloved science, Music, with thy sweet melody and charming song!
Now I am an attorney and a lawyer, yet I return to thee, dear Music)

Zacharias, is attired in the flaming scarlet costume then worn by the Papal singers. At the top of the pages, figure the names of fourteen composers; but, in the case of two, the music is missing. The red stave-lines are ruled, the composer's miniature is painted, the ornamental border is completed, but no notes were ever transcribed on the empty staves. Thus, the pages reserved for the famous Florentine tenor, Abbot Paul, are blank.

The most celebrated name in the *Squarcialupi* MS is that of the blind organist, Francesco Landini. The pages which contain his songs are of particular interest. Apart from the music itself, many details regarding the state of the art are to be learnt even from the words of the songs and the illustrations provided by the illuminator.

"Francescus Cæcus, horganista de Florentia," as the scribe calls him, holds a little portable organ on his knee. He is depicted in blue gown and scarlet cape, and his red, turban-like headdress is encircled by a wreath of laurel leaves. This wreath recalls an incident that took place at Venice in 1364, when the blind poet-musician was victorious in an artistic contest at which Petrarch was one of the judges. It is uncertain whether Francescus was crowned as a poet or as a musician, but it is recorded that his organ playing aroused the admiration of the Venetians.

Into the decorative border that frames this page, the artist has introduced the eight principal instruments in use in the fourteenth century. At the top comes a lute whose neck, bent at right angles, is caught in the curve of a branch. Below it hang a viol, a mandorla, a harp, a psalterium, three tibiæ (flutes), and three trumpets. In a miniature, inset at the foot of the page, a sorrowful young woman is seen playing an organ of the same type as Francesco's. This little picture illustrates the subject of the song: the lady is Music herself, who weeps over the state of her beloved art. Landini, who has written his own words, vents his criticism of contemporary music in the form of a three-part song. Music complains that composers neglect the beautiful and the sublime, and devote themselves to such music as the *Frottola*, a light type of song then in fashion. Landini goes on to mention the chief song-forms in use; he laments the ignorance of many of the new composers and the confusion that results from the multiplicity of styles and systems.

"Every one wants to write music now,"[1] he declares, "to compose *madrigals*, *cacce* and *ballate;* and each maintains that his own manner is the only genuine one." For composers were already writing not only *ballate* (dance songs), and *cacce* (hunting songs in the form of *canons*), but also *madrigals*, a type that is here mentioned for the first time.

Of all the composers whose songs are recorded in the *Squarcialupi* MS, Landini was the most celebrated in his day. And his achievements remained the pride of Florence even after his death. A Florentine, writing in defence of his city boasted: "as regards the liberal arts, we lack nothing. In music,

[1] "Ciascun vuol numerar musical note
Compor madrial, cacce, ballate,
Tenendo ognun le sue autenticate."

Page from the Squarcialupi MS showing Francesco Landini playing on a portable organ, also the words and music of one of his songs.

(By permission of the Directress of the Laurentian Library, Florence.)

Detail of Orcagna's "Trionfo della Morte" showing lady playing the Psalterium, while figure on right plays the Giga.

(Photo - Anderson, Rome)

we have Francesco, bodily blind but mentally illumined; in his day, no one was a better composer of sweet songs, or had such skill on all the instruments, especially the organ."

In spite of Landini's censure of the various new methods of writing down music, composers of that day can hardly be blamed for trying to improve their notational system. Their difficulty in noting down music accurately by means of the signs at their disposal can be measured by our difficulty in deciphering it to-day. Expert musicologists like Coussemaker, Riemann, Wolf, Combarieu, often disagree as to the reading of this music; many, indeed, hold that it is a closed book to us for ever.[1]

But, though the transcriptions of the authorities often vary, the general characteristics of this music are clear. These songs lack, it is true, a sense of formal unity, and their harmonies are apt to be naïve and harsh; but the melodic line is usually good, and they have all the freshness and freedom of the little poems that inspired them. In the upper part, or *canto*, there is a tendency to elaborate vocalises, which seem already to foreshadow the coloratura passages of later days. The importance of the *canto* or melody as compared to the other parts, and the fact that the latter are sometimes not well suited to the voice, make it probable that these songs were often sung by a soloist, the secondary parts being played by lutes or viols.

That the old Italian composers were known and appreciated in other countries can be seen from the fact that numbers of these songs are included in other ancient MSS of this period now preserved in Paris and London libraries.[2] French songs also found their way to Italy. The *Squarcialupi* MS includes one by Guillaume de Machaut de Francia, one of the greatest of the early French composers.

As regards rhythm, medieval music was originally limited to triple time, which was considered the "perfect" measure. The first to free themselves from this rhythmic monotony were the Italians; at an early stage, they began to write also in duple time inspired, no doubt, partly by their own folk-music (which was often in a two-beat measure), partly by the new Italian poetic metres. Henceforward, the frequent use of duple time became a characteristic feature of Italian music, as distinct from French and Flemish music.

Theoretical writers were at first loth to recognize this innovation. Marchettus of Padua disapproved of the practice of his countrymen, and considered that the French were right in banning duple time as "imperfect." But the novelty gradually received the sanction of usage. A century later, Beldemandis of Padua, writing of mensural music "ad modum italicorum," recognized the use of duple time, and this new element, which opened up such rhythmic possibilities, passed from Italy to other countries.

[1] The worst problems arise from the complicated manner of indicating rhythm and note values, and from the lack of bar-lines. A further difficulty for the modern reader results from the custom of writing out each part separately, instead of in score form. At the top of the page, the complete Canto, or Melody, is given; then follow the tenor, contra-tenor, and bass parts.

[2] Paris Bib. Nat. MS 568; London Br. Mus. Add. MSS 29987.

CHAPTER III

ARRIVAL OF THE FLEMISH. GROWTH OF THE RENAISSANCE COURTS

THE long sojourn of the Popes at Avignon during the fourteenth century brought about an artistic intercourse between France and Italy that changed the whole orientation of Italian music.

The Papal Choir, which had always been selected with care, was recruited during this period (1305-1377) from amongst the best French and Flemish singers. They were responsible for the introduction of *discantus*, a style of polyphony, in great favour in France, which consisted in the improvisation of a second part to a Gregorian melody. The resulting performance was often so contrary to the spirit of the traditional church style that Pope John XXII found it advisable to restrict the use of this polyphonic innovation.

Before the end of the fourteenth century, the art of counterpoint had begun its wonderful development in northern France and Flanders. Composers and singers flocked thence to Avignon; and when the Papal Court returned to Rome, the choir that followed it was composed entirely of northern musicians. So great was their prestige, that for a hundred and fifty years, Flemish music was supreme not only in Rome, but all over Italy.

The Italians soon assimilated the northern contrapuntal science, adapting it to their own less formal taste; but they were overwhelmed by the superior skill and numbers of the highly-trained foreign musicians. The result was that the national musical developments which had begun with so much promise in fourteenth-century Florence, came to a sudden end. Native musicians were now to be found chiefly in the ranks of the instrumentalists; they were still in great demand as lutenists, organists, and viol players; but it was some time before Italians rose to any degree of eminence as composers.

Rome, which had been a dead city during the absence of the Popes at Avignon, began to flourish again in the fifteenth century. Architects, painters, sculptors, were employed to beautify the city. Music, like all the other artistic activities of Rome, had for its centre the Papal Court. Not only were all the singers supplied by Flanders at this period, but the greatest of the Flemish composers: Dufay, Josquin des Près, Orlando di Lasso, wrote Masses and *motets* for the Roman churches and for the choirs of many other Italian cities.

Meanwhile, in many parts of Italy, interest in both religious and secular music was increasing. The more important towns and the courts of the great nobles began to show signs of the intellectual and artistic activity that was a distinguishing mark of Renaissance civilization. Already in the four-

teenth century, one Italian town had come to be regarded as a cultural centre.

One of the earliest courts to which poets and artists were welcomed was that of the Della Scala at Verona, whose rise to power coincided with the dawn of the cultural movement. The Della Scala were from the very beginning patrons of learning. The most famous of their guests was Dante; Verona being one of the first towns to offer him shelter when the triumph of his political enemies obliged him to flee from Florence. Later on, too, during his long exile, Dante returned to Verona and was hospitably received by Can Grande Della Scala. Another Florentine exile, the poet Petrarch, found his way to the court of these princes, under whose sway the medieval city flourished wonderfully.

Nor was the budding art of music neglected there. The Della Scala induced one of the best Florentine organists of the day to desert that home of music. Tempted by the generous appointments offered him, Giovanni da Cascia, otherwise known as Giovanni Fiorentino—the composer whose songs occupy the opening pages of the *Squarcialupi* MS—left the cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore, and settled in Verona. There he continued to write his *madrigals* and play his organ for the delight of the Veronese.

Before the end of the fourteenth century, the star of the Della Scala had already set. But the following century was to witness the creation of a number of similar small states where, in company with all the other arts that helped to make life pleasant, music was cultivated with an enthusiasm that gave it a valuable impetus.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the influence exercised by the various Renaissance courts on the development of secular music during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The fact that the Renaissance princes employed more foreigners than Italians would seem, at first sight, detrimental to native art; but the remarkable maturity of Flemish music at that time made its supremacy inevitable throughout Europe.

The commercial prosperity which the wool trade had brought to Flanders during the fourteenth century and which had resulted in the rapid increase of the wealth and population of the towns (in particular of Cambrai, Ghent and Bruges), had so stimulated Flemish art that it quickly surpassed that of the rest of Europe both in expressive quality and technical perfection. Whilst the great painters, Van Eyck, Van der Weyden and Memling, produced masterpieces in which a sense of detail was a distinguishing feature; a school of composers grew up who rapidly developed the rudimentary art of polyphony, and whose works displayed a similar tendency to minute elaboration. The contrapuntal innovations of the Flemish composers so enriched musical material, that the art was now able to make great strides forward.

As Flanders itself could not provide positions for the numbers of musicians her schools produced, many of them made their way abroad. Good singers were always in demand at the courts of the Kings of France and the Dukes of Burgundy. But no country offered better opportunities than music-

loving Italy. The chief ambition of the best Flemish musicians was to belong to the Papal Choir for which their country continued to supply singers, choirmasters and composers from the fourteenth until the middle of the sixteenth century, when Palestrina was to give Italian music and musicians a new prestige.

On their way down to Rome, the Flemish discovered that music was greatly appreciated at the courts of all the Italian nobles. There was a welcome for anyone who was a skilled performer on the organ or lute and who, in addition to church music, could sing the new songs—half-folk, half-art songs—that were becoming popular. So, in their hundreds, the Northern musicians poured into Italy, and soon held all the highest positions in cathedrals, schools and princely households.

Choirs were all-important for the performance of polyphonic music; for great music was still church music. One by one, the wealthy nobles founded choirs for their private chapels where contrapuntal music was executed by Flemish singers. Many famous members of the Papal Choir were employed for a number of years in the choirs of one or other of the Renaissance courts, for which celebrated composers were commissioned to write music. Thus, religious choral singing reached a good standard in many parts of Italy during the fifteenth century.

The reception given to artists and musicians by the Italian princes had no parallel in any other country. The majority of these noblemen were genuinely interested in art; but it was not always for purely personal reasons that they encouraged it. Culture was an integral part of the social system in Renaissance days. A ruler who could meet the intellectuals on an equal footing gained prestige thereby; for the revival of classical learning had given men a new respect for the power of knowledge.

Many of the Renaissance lords were soldiers of fortune, who had won their state by conquest, and held it as much by the exercise of their intelligence and personal magnetism, as by force of arms. They did not live like feudal nobles within a narrow circle of uneducated courtiers and men-at-arms; they realized that it was good policy to attract to their courts those who were in the van of the new movement. Many of these men were admitted to a familiarity, hitherto unusual. For their often democratic origin was not likely to offend a ruler, who was possibly not of very ancient lineage himself; whilst their artistic and literary achievements lent such glamour to the court that sheltered them, that their very presence was regarded as a social asset.

Of the families that lorded it over various portions of Italy—and whose power was in some cases ephemeral, in others enduring—the most celebrated were: the Montefeltro of Urbino, the d'Este of Ferrara and Modena, the Sforza of Milan, and the Gonzaga of Mantua.

Italian music owes its later glorious development not only to the schools of Florence, Venice, Rome, Naples, Bologna, Padua and Parma, but also, in a large measure, to the favourable atmosphere of these small courts where music was so intelligently fostered.

CHAPTER IV

MUSIC AT THE COURT OF URBINO

THE court of the Montefeltro of Urbino holds a unique place in the annals of the Renaissance period. Probably in no age, and in no country, was the creation of the Ideal State so nearly achieved as in this little fifteenth-century Italian dukedom. According to the unanimous verdict of their contemporaries, the Montefeltro were exceptional rulers; for they were neither tyrants nor extortionists like the majority of their compeers. The last three Lords of Urbino, in particular, were noted for the justice and wisdom of their government. In spite of the impressive grandeur of their surroundings, their style of living was simple; and being themselves men of culture, they gathered about them the most intellectual people of their day, and encouraged the spread of art and learning in their State.

The man who made Urbino "The Athens of Italy," and whose subjects were the most free and contented in the land, was Federico of Montefeltro, fourth Count and first Duke of Urbino. During his lifetime, he was to earn still more glorious titles: Mahomet the Second called him "the Great Christian," and Baldassare Castiglione, "the Light of Italy." The magnificent palace which he built high up above the lonely hill-town of the Roman Marche, aloof from the principal currents of medieval life, was to become a famous centre of culture.

Federico came at an early age under the influence of Vittorino da Feltre, one of the great inspirers of the Renaissance movement. When he was twelve years old, young Montefeltro was sent to Mantua to be educated and trained in knightly duties at the court of the Gonzaga, whose children were pupils of the famous Vittorino. On the way up from Urbino, Federico was the victim of a contretemps, common enough in those days. He was seized and handed over to the Signoria of Venice, as a hostage for his father, who was involved in a dispute with the Pope, Eugene IV. Fortunately for the boy, the matter was soon settled, and after a few months, he was able to proceed to Vittorino's school at Mantua.

The pupils at the "Casa Zoiosa" (Joyful House), as the school was called, were taught all the classical lore in which the Renaissance teachers specialized. But Vittorino da Feltre, like Plato, believed also in the efficacy of "gymnastics for the body and music for the mind." A Spartan simplicity of life was the rule at the Casa Zoiosa where the sons of nobles mixed on an equal footing with the poor students whom Vittorino took in "for the love of God." The success of this original educational experiment was so great, that pupils flocked to Mantua not only from every part of Italy but also from foreign countries.

Music was an important factor in the training; partly for its own sake,

partly because this follower of Plato held that "rhythm and harmony enter into the inward part of the soul and most powerfully affect it" for good. So the children at the Casa Zoiosa learnt to sing and to play the simple instruments of the day. The medieval mathematical science of music was also taught, and so efficiently, that the school produced one of the most famous theoretical writers of the fifteenth century: Joannes Carthusianus who, though born in Namur, was called Joannes of Mantua. He had learnt singing in the choir-school of his native town; but had come to Mantua to study the science of music, which together with arithmetic, geometry and astronomy, formed the medieval "Quadrivium" of the arts.

At Vittorino's school, young Montefeltro, too, learnt the art of music which remained one of his favourite recreations when he succeeded his father as Duke; and testimony to his interest in music can still be found at Urbino to-day.

Castiglione, in describing Federico's palace which, he remarks, "many consider to be the finest in Italy," mentions the wonderful *objets d'art* the Duke had collected there: ornaments of silver, hangings of gold brocade, antique marbles, bronzes, valuable pictures "and musical instruments of every kind. Nor would he admit anything within its walls," adds Castiglione, "that was not most rare and excellent."

Federico's beautiful palace still stands; uninhabited now and bereft of its rich treasures; but still strikingly impressive. The traveller approaching from Tuscany is thrilled by the sight of the ancient rose-brown town of Urbino, perched on the summit of a prominent hill and crowned by the palace whose two slender, soaring towers seem to pierce the sky.

Federico's famous library of Greek, Latin and Hebrew books and MSS is now at the Vatican. Not a single piece of furniture, and only one[1] out of a thousand pictures remained in the palace when the Italian State decided to restore and preserve this marvellous monument to medieval culture. The musical instruments to which Federico listened with so much pleasure, are scattered far and wide; but the very doors and walls of the palace for which Botticelli and Piero della Francesca designed many of the decorations, speak eloquently of the musical tastes of Federico da Montefeltro.

A primitive type of music is illustrated in the bas-relief by Domenico Rosselli carved on the mantelpiece of the beautiful Sala degli Angeli, where against a blue background, a chain of cherubs dance to flute, cymbals and bagpipes; instruments which often accompanied the dancing of the courtiers in this very hall.

Much more sophisticated is the figure carried out in marquetry on one of the doors of this room, representing Apollo in characteristic Botticellian draperies, playing the viola da braccio. A lute and an organ serve as decorative motifs for the inlaid panels of another door. Pictures are inevitably carried away from a dismantled palace, and frescoes fade; but, thanks to Federico's taste for decorative inlay, the types of instruments that were

[1] A "Head of Christ" by Melozzo da Forlì.

played in the palace of Urbino are reproduced with such perfection of detail, stand out so plastically in the skilfully-shaded woods, that one fancies one could take them up and play them.

Federico's interest in music is most apparent in his *studiolo*, the little retreat to which he used to withdraw for study and meditation. Here, the wainscoting, which covers the lower part of the walls, is elaborately ornamented with marquetry in many-tinted woods: browns, creams, black. The versatility of Federico's occupations and pastimes is illustrated by the war-like weapons and the scientific and artistic objects that are represented on the panels. But musical instruments are in the ascendant. Here is an exact replica of a portable organ with its pipes and keys; it bears the name of the maker: Johani Castelano, and the date 1476. Nearby, is a five-stringed viol, and other panels show lutes and flutes, trumpets and drums of war.

Even more precious than the richly-ornamented Renaissance instruments were the music books in those days, when every note had still to be copied out by hand. Two open books of manuscript music stand out realistically on the wainscoting. The five-line stave, the clefs, the time and key signatures and the notes are faithfully rendered. One of the books, which reproduces a page from the Duke's own MS book, is open at a four-part hymn in his honour: *Bella gerit musasque colit federicus, omnium maximus italorum Dux foris atque domi*. On the opposite wall, the music book of his wife, Battista Sforza, lies open at a three-part song in her praise.

Below an intarsia figure of the Duke, his favourite clavicembalo is reproduced with its twenty-nine white and eighteen black keys. The lid stands open, the golden wires still glitter. When Federico sat in this corner of his *studiolo*, surrounded by these realistic symbols of his favourite occupations, he could gaze through the open door of the loggia which connects the twin towers, on a vista of his own broad domains stretching away to the horizon in a lovely panorama of hill behind hill.

Originally, the walls above the wainscoting were hung with the portraits of twenty-eight famous men, painted for Federico by the Flemish artist, Juste de Gand; the place of honour being given to the portrait of Vittorino da Feltre. For the adornment of the great library on the ground floor, the Duke commissioned Melozzo da Forlì to paint a series of allegorical pictures of the seven Liberal Arts of medieval times. The finest, which represents the art of Music, is now in the National Gallery, London.[1] Music, personified by Federico's fifth daughter, Violante, sits enthroned, while her husband, Costanzo Sforza, kneels before her; she hands him a score, and points to a little organ at her feet.

Giovanni Sanzio of Urbino, father of Raphael, in the very dull poem in praise of his beloved Duke which he wrote at the time of Federico's death, mentions music as one of his favourite pastimes. For a man who spent most of his life in warfare, Duke Federico had very peaceful tastes. He disliked the music of trumpets and of the other brass instruments that

[1]This picture is now ascribed to Juste de Gand, painting under the influence of Melozzo da Forlì. (*Frontispiece*).

constituted the official State bands. "He enjoyed delicate rather than loud music," wrote one of his old biographers, "and he delighted in the organ and light-toned instruments." (The little organ of those days was no doubt discreet enough in tone.)

Federico could devote only rare months of leisure to such peaceful pastimes. For he was a condottiere, a professional soldier, and was engaged to lead the armies, now of the Papal States, now of Florence, Milan or Naples. There was always some little war in progress for which the services of this experienced and successful captain were in request. And as Federico made a point of running his State as much as possible on his professional earnings, the subjects of this ideal ruler were practically untaxed.

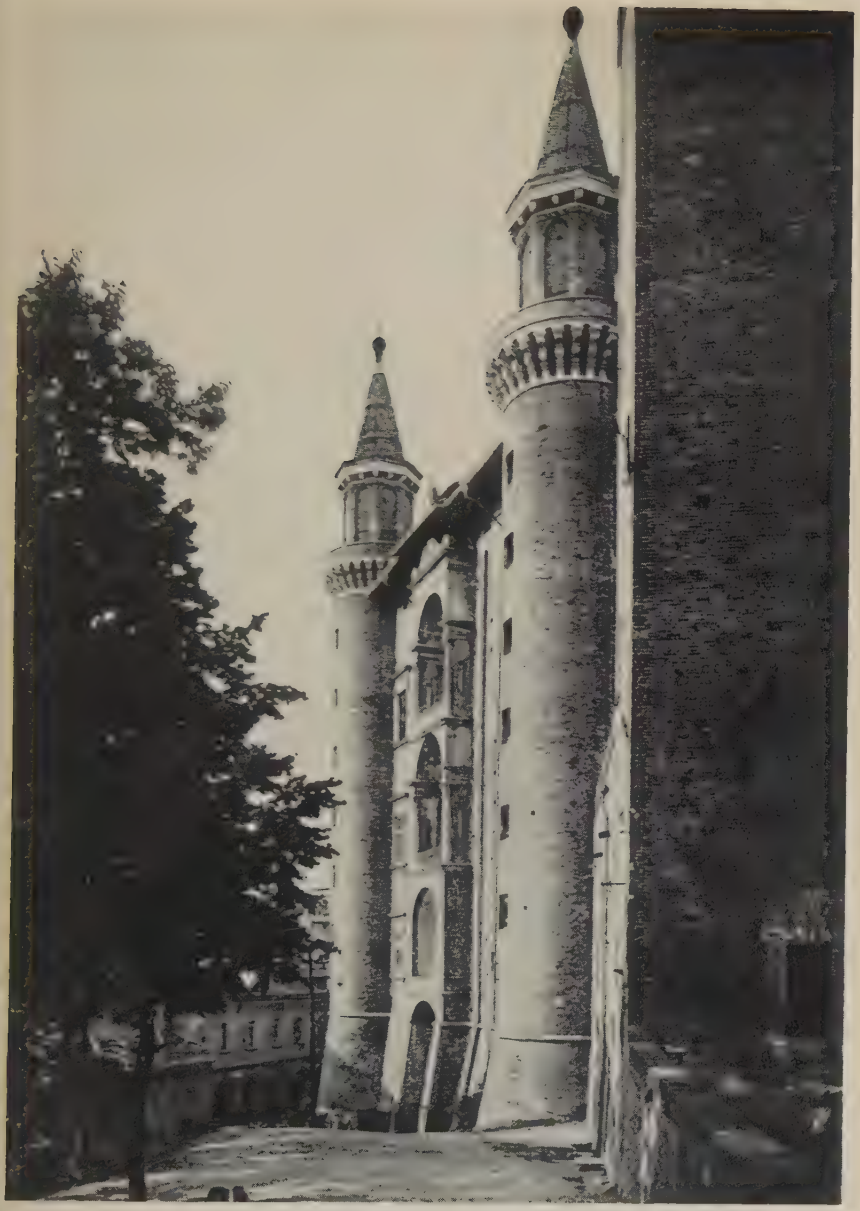
When the Duke rode out of Urbino at the head of his men-at-arms, to take command of the troops of whichever state had engaged him, the whole court, including his singers and his band of lutenists, accompanied him as far as the great highway. Then, bidding him farewell, they returned to the palace to wait until the condottiere could devote himself again to the arts of peace.

Federico employed a good many musicians at Urbino; but the list of his household only gives the names of those belonging to the chapel and the guard. Six trumpeters and two cymbalists sufficed for the music of the guard; whilst the chapel was served by three men singers, who had to be "experienced and well-trained," five boys (called *putti cantori*) and two organists; one of the latter was Maestro Andrea da Ferrara, a musician of some fame.

Music played a still more important part at the court of Urbino during the reign of Federico's son Guidobaldo (1482-1508), whose wife, Elisabetta, belonged to the music-loving Gonzaga family. Besides encouraging the cultivation of music at court, Guidobaldo founded and endowed a choir for the cathedral which his father had built close beside the palace.

The new Duke's regulations for the administration of his household contained a section concerning the musicians entitled: "De li sonatori." It decreed that: "the household shall include some excellent musicians, and there must always be two or three singers who can sing softly and expressively (sotto voce et cum dolcezza), to suit my tastes and those of the Châtelaine; they must also be able to play the lute and the cittern. . . . And for the service of the chapel, a first-class organist shall be engaged who can, when required, play any other instrument we may wish to hear."

Guidobaldo's wife, Elisabetta, and her ladies devoted many of their evening hours to singing and playing. The Duchess's favourite songs were the new settings of Petrarch's poems, usually sung to lute accompaniment, and Josquin des Près' arrangement of Virgil's *Lamentation for Dido*. Elisabetta had been taught music at her father's court at Mantua; and Guidobaldo had studied with Ottaviano de Petrucci, a native of Fossombrone, in the State of Urbino who, later on, gave a great impetus to musical development by inventing the art of music printing. Petrucci established his works in Venice at the beginning of the sixteenth century. He was the first music



The Palace of Urbino.

(*Photo: Anderson, Rome.*)

Federico of Urbino's Studiolo.
(Photo: Anderson, Rome.)

publisher, and his collections of contemporary songs have preserved for us the works of the Italian, Flemish and French composers who were famous in Renaissance Italy.

Musicians from other parts of the country often came to Urbino. One of the most welcome visitors was the viol player, Jacopo di Sansecondo. Others, whose names are mentioned in connection with Urbino, are: the celebrated lutenist, Gian Maria Giudeo; Lorenzo da Pavia, the instrument maker; Andrea da Roma, whom Giovanni Sanzio calls "a great composer"; Cristofero Romano and Adriano Fiorentino, both of whom combined the arts of sculpture and music, one playing the lute, the other the lyre. Intellectuals of all types were attracted to Urbino where, according to Raphael's father, they found "alta quieta, la vita dolce e lieta" (peace in those lofty heights, a gay and pleasant life).

When Cæsar Borgia wrested the Duchy from the gentle, scholarly Guidobaldo, there came an interval of two sad years for Urbino, which Elisabetta spent for the most part at Venice under the protection of the Signoria whilst the Duke went to plead his cause in Rome.

When Guidobaldo regained his lands (in 1503), he brought back with him in his suite a man who was to immortalize the name of Urbino. This was Baldassare Castiglione, whose famous book, *Il Cortegiano* (The Courtier), describes the discussions on life and art that took place in the evenings at the palace.

Even as he rode into Urbino in the Duke's suite, Castiglione realized that this was no ordinary Renaissance State. It is not to be wondered at if, after some experience of the Borgias, the people of Urbino were delighted to return to the mild rule of the Montefeltro. Castiglione, who was an experienced diplomat and in touch with big European courts, described, in a subsequent letter to Henry the Seventh of England, the remarkable scenes of rejoicing he witnessed on Guidobaldo's entrance to Urbino when "crowds of children flocked to meet him, singing for joy."

Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* contains his own more or less fanciful accounts of discussions at which he was often present in the room now known as the "Sala delle Veglie," the Hall of the Vigils, because these meetings often lasted well into the night.

The Duchess Elisabetta presided over this company of men and women, many of whose names are famous. Besides the ducal couple, their kinswoman Emilia Pia, and Castiglione himself, the group usually included: Pietro Bembo, Giuliano de' Medici, Jacopo di Sansecondo, Ludovico Canossa, Aretino and the singer, Gasparo Siciliano.

All the intellectuals of the day paid frequent visits to Urbino; and the most interesting people in Italy were to be met at this court to which, Bembo declared, "merit was the only passport."

Castiglione's allusions to music show that even at this early stage of its development, the art was taken very seriously. The chief discussions he records are concerned with the qualities of the ideal courtier and, in enumerating the talents he should possess, Ludovico Canossa declares: "I shall not

be satisfied unless the courtier is also a musician, can play the various instruments and read music." And Lorenzo de' Medici's son, Giuliano the Magnificent, also maintains that training in music is essential for the perfect courtier.

The kinds of music he should cultivate is the next question debated. Fregosa's remarks show us what types were then most admired. He says: "I should describe as beautiful music, part-singing performed accurately and with finished style; finer still is singing to the viol; but the most beautiful form of all is recitation to viol accompaniment. The keyed instruments," he adds, "are all of them harmonious because of the perfection of the consonances they produce." This speaker also mentions with admiration, "the music of the four bowed viols," which meant, no doubt, the forerunner of the String Quartet, four-part songs played by a set of viols.

Giuliano de' Medici, who knows his theory of music, alludes, in passing, to the unpleasant effect produced by two perfect consonances in succession; "such progressions," he declares, "offend the ear and mar the harmony."

Various styles of interpretation are also discussed. "Consider music," says Canossa, "everyone finds pleasure in it, but for different reasons. Take Bidon's[1] manner of singing. All who hear him are deeply moved and inspired. Yet, our Marchetto Cara[2] does not appeal to us less, though his subtler harmonies have a more soothing effect on the mind."

The singer, Gasparo Siciliano, mentions a phenomenon with which the musical world is still familiar; namely the reluctance of a critical audience to pronounce in favour of a work of unknown authorship. "When a *motet* was sung recently in the presence of the Duchess," remarks Gasparo, "no one seemed to like it, no one had anything to say in praise of it, until it became known that the music was by Josquin des Près."

One gathers that this group was familiar with the various aspects of music and accustomed to hearing all the instruments of the period: the lute, lyre, clavicembalo, flute, horn and organ, of which so many beautiful specimens had been collected already in Federico's time.

To-day, in the Sala delle Veglie, between the windows that look down on the little hanging-garden designed for Federico's wife, Battista Sforza, lie a few old stringed instruments; among them is a theorbo, or bass lute which, one likes to imagine, was sometimes played in that room where Elisabetta and her friends often ended their discussions with music.

It was through the tall windows in the opposite wall that the first rays of the dawn shone in and surprised the company at the last Vigil described by Castiglione when, carried away by their enthusiasm, Elisabetta and her friends had lost all count of time and talked throughout the night.

Among the pictures connected with this period that have been recently hung in the palace, is one by Raphael who, like Bramante, was a native of Urbino. As in the case of so many old paintings, a number of originals have been ascribed to this "Portrait of an Unknown Lady." Some are of

[1] Bidon became a famous singer in the Papal Choir under Leo X.

[2] A favourite musician at the Court of Mantua.

opinion that Elisabetta Gonzaga was Raphael's model. The picture is said to have been found in Castiglione's house after his death; and the "Unknown Lady" wears the knotted chain and cross that writer described as being worn by the Duchess, whose skill as a lutenist and singer Castiglione praised so enthusiastically in his ode: *de Elisabetta Gonzaga Canente*.[1]

Duke Francesco Maria Della Rovere, who succeeded Guidobaldo, and his wife Eleanora Gonzaga (a niece of Elisabetta), carried on the musical traditions of their predecessors. They brought good musicians to their court, and talented young men of Urbino were sent at their expense to study music with the best Flemish and Italian masters.

On the death of Francesco Maria, Urbino ceased to be an independent state. The books and MSS, paintings and other art treasures, were carried off to other towns and the glory of Urbino ended. But Federico's magnificent palace and Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* remain as reminders of the past greatness of this remote little town which was for nearly a century one of the chief artistic centres of Italy.

[1] "Dulces exuviæ, dum fata, deusque sinebant
Dum canit, e querulum pollice tangit, ebur
Formosa e cælo deducit Elisa tonantem . . ."

CHAPTER V

MUSIC AT THE COURT OF FERRARA

THE other Renaissance courts were not behindhand in the cultivation of the arts. Particularly brilliant developments were seen at Ferrara during the long rule of the d'Este family.

The name is to-day linked in our minds with the beautiful villa at Tivoli, outside Rome, built in the sixteenth century by Cardinal Ippolito d'Este II, and haunted for us by the personality of Liszt who spent so much time there during the last years of his life. But the d'Este, one of the oldest and most famous of Italian families, belonged to northern Italy. For centuries, as Lords of Ferrara, Modena and Reggio, they were noted patrons of learning. Among the writers who lived at their court were Ariosto and Tasso, both of whom dedicated several works to the d'Este.

Ferrara, their principal seat, is one of the oldest Italian towns of musical reputation, for its traditions go back to the days of the troubadours. But it was not until the fifteenth century, when numbers of Flemish and Italian musicians flocked thither, that the town became a centre of musical life. Soon, the influence of Ferrara extended to Milan and Mantua, where the two most celebrated women of the d'Este family were living at the end of the fifteenth century: Beatrice, at Milan, as the wife of Ludovico Sforza (Il Moro), later Duke of Milan; and her sister Isabella at Mantua, as wife of the Marquess, Francesco Gonzaga.

These marriages, and the equally close ties between Mantua and Urbino, resulted in frequent intercourse between the four principal Renaissance courts; and community of tastes and interests led to an artistic rivalry that proved highly beneficial to the growth of music.

At an early period, the d'Este princes had given thought to the architectural beauty of their chief town. They showed no little guile and foresight when they encouraged exiled Florentine merchants to settle at Ferrara and build splendid palaces radiating from that central point of architectural interest—their own grandiose fourteenth-century castle. Its four square towers are still mirrored in the broad moat that made it a safe stronghold for the d'Este in the frequently recurring periods of revolt or conspiracy. The interior has been sadly altered and modernised; but the impressive exterior of this now deserted building still seems to express the arrogant pride of the family which described itself in its archival documents as "La Magnifica Communità d'Este."

Unlike the peaceful court of Urbino, Ferrara was often the scene of crime and violence; and the d'Este rulers taxed their subjects just as much as they dared. But the majority of them were men of character and strong personality, and so well versed in the art of making themselves popular

with all classes, that their tyranny was tolerated. Most of the d'Este were cultured, and all of them realized the importance of keeping in the vanguard of the intellectual movement.

While Vittorino da Feltre taught the young Gonzaga and the citizens of Mantua, the d'Este brought to Ferrara another famous teacher, Guarino of Verona, who had studied Greek at Constantinople, and had taught at Florence and Venice. Thanks to Guarino's influence, Ferrara quickly became a centre of cultural activity; it was one of the chief towns to attract the great Flemish painters who came to Italy during the fifteenth century.

Music in its turn entered on an important period of development during the reign of Guarino's pupil, Duke Ercole (father of Isabella and Beatrice). In 1473, Ercole d'Este married Leonora of Aragon, daughter of the King of Naples, at whose court Flemish musicians were already employed. Leonora brought one of them, Jachetto di Marville, to Ferrara in her suite; others followed and soon many northern singers and composers made the town their headquarters. Of their number was the famous Jacob Obrecht who, as a young man, was a singer at the court of Duke Ercole. Like many of his compatriots, Obrecht, some years later, went back to his native Belgium, but eventually returned to Ferrara and settled there.

Although so many foreign singers and composers came to Italy at this period, there were never enough to supply the demand. From time to time, Duke Ercole would send his musician, Verbonetto, to France to engage more singers for his choir. Returning from such a mission in 1503, Verbonetto travelled from Paris in the company of an envoy of the French King, who was on his way to Urbino to offer Guidobaldo—recently reinstated in his Duchy—the congratulations of Louis the Twelfth, and present him with five beautiful horses. On this occasion, Verbonetto had been highly successful in his quest for musical talent, for he brought back with him to Ferrara no less a person than Josquin des Près, the glory of the Netherland School. Josquin lived for some time at the d'Este courts of Ferrara and Modena. Among the works he composed for their choir was a Mass, written on a theme suggested by Duke Ercole's name: *Hercules Dux Ferrarie*. (The theme was re, ut, re, ut, re, fa, mi, re; the vowels in the note names corresponding to those in the Duke's title.)[1] Composers did not see anything inappropriate in subjects of this kind; for it was then the custom to choose for the theme of a Mass, a phrase from any popular song.

The three Dukes who ruled over the d'Este State during the sixteenth century had many celebrated Flemish composers in their employment. Antoine Brumel, Heinrich Isaac, Adrian Willaert and Cyprian de Rore all frequented Ferrara, though their names are more closely connected with other Italian towns. Many of the northern musicians who came to Italy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were priests, who had been trained as singers, organists and choir-masters in their own countries, and

[1] Another Flemish composer, Cyprian de Rore, was to write a Mass on a similar theme for the fourth Duke, another Ercole. "Vivat felix Hercules secundus, dux Ferrarie quartus," gave the longer theme: mi, fa, re, mi, re, ut, re, re, ut, ut, re, fa, mi, re, fa, ut.

who, as composers, concentrated chiefly on church music, to which their strict contrapuntal style was admirably adapted.

In Ferrara, as elsewhere, currents of Flemish and Italian music flowed side by side at this period. For long, the Italians left the field of sacred music to the foreigners, and devoted themselves to the composition of secular songs and the playing of such instruments as the lute and viol, which were then coming into favour at courtly entertainments. The only other secular instrumental music then in vogue was the State Band consisting of trumpets, trombones and fifes, that played for processions, pageants, dances and all local festivities.

During the course of the sixteenth century, however, the native musicians began to increase in numbers and importance; and, with such composers as the two Della Viola, Ercole Pasquini and Luzzasco Luzzaschi, Ferrara possessed the nucleus of a local "school." It was Luzzaschi who trained his fellow-townsman, the famous composer and organist, Gerolamo Frescobaldi, later to win great renown in Rome and to influence profoundly the development of organ playing and of instrumental form.

The artistic prestige of Ferrara reached its climax towards the close of the sixteenth century under Alfonso the Second, the last of the d'Este to reign there. Montaigne, who visited the town at this period, was struck by the splendour of the court, then one of the most cultured and brilliant in Europe. Music, in which the Duke and his sisters were particularly interested, was also the favourite pastime of their subjects. Courtiers and townsfolk practised the art with equal enthusiasm; the amateurs rivalling the professional musicians.

In order to encourage musical intercourse between the town and the court, Alfonso founded a society, known as the "Accademia dei Concordi," which brought together the thirty-two musicians of his household and the musical amateurs of the town; and visitors to the d'Este court were greatly impressed by the standard of their performances. There was a concert every evening at which lutes, viols, lyres and cembalo combined to form a rudimentary orchestra. But the chief attraction was the singing of the ladies at the "Concerte delle Dame." The principal singers: Tarquina Mola, Laura Peperra and Vittoria Bentivoglio, were among the first Italian women to make a name as serious musicians. The composer, Luzzaschi, kept them supplied with part-songs, chiefly *madrigals* and *villanelle*. An interesting development was the rivalry which sprang up between them and the ladies of Mantua, where music had by this time also attained a high standard.

Duke Alfonso possessed many beautiful instruments which met with the usual fate of such collections; they were gradually dispersed and only a few specimens can be traced to-day. When the d'Este lost Ferrara, in 1597, they moved their court to Modena, bringing with them their library, archives and art treasures. To-day, Modena still houses their library, the Biblioteca Estense, and the Museum contains some of their pictures, and a few other relics. These include some musical instruments: a harp, a viola da braccio, a violin and a heavily-carved violoncello. There are also two curious freak

The Castle of Ferrara.
(By permission of the Director of the E.N.I.T.)

Donatello's "Angeli Musicanti"; bronze bas-reliefs on the front of the altar of Sant 'Antonio at the Basilica Padua.

(Photo: Ediz, Messaggero di S. Antonio, Padua.)

instruments: a violin and a guitar made of marble, elaborately inlaid and fitted with strings and pegs—sinister-looking objects, suggesting funereal monuments to the memory of the living music with which the d'Este surrounded themselves from the earliest times.

These remarkable people left their mark on both the material and artistic aspects of life in the State over which they ruled for so long; they turned a swampy plain into a fertile province, and made of their flourishing capital an important cultural centre. The d'Este and the other Renaissance princes did as much for the encouragement of music as the German nobles who, a couple of centuries later, were to give such an impetus to the development of the art in Germany.

Other towns profited by the artistic activities of Ferrara. The musical development of Mantua was largely due to the influence of Isabella d'Este; and her sister Beatrice's short life at Milan, coincided with the most brilliant period of a court which attracted the best Flemish musicians during the last decades of the fifteenth century.

CHAPTER VI

MUSIC AT THE COURT OF MILAN

EACH of the great families that created the Renaissance courts, whose wealth, love of ceremonious splendour and interest in the contemporary artistic movements made them ideal patrons of art, is typified to-day by a castle or palace, that remains as a symbol of their power and a testimony to their artistic sense.

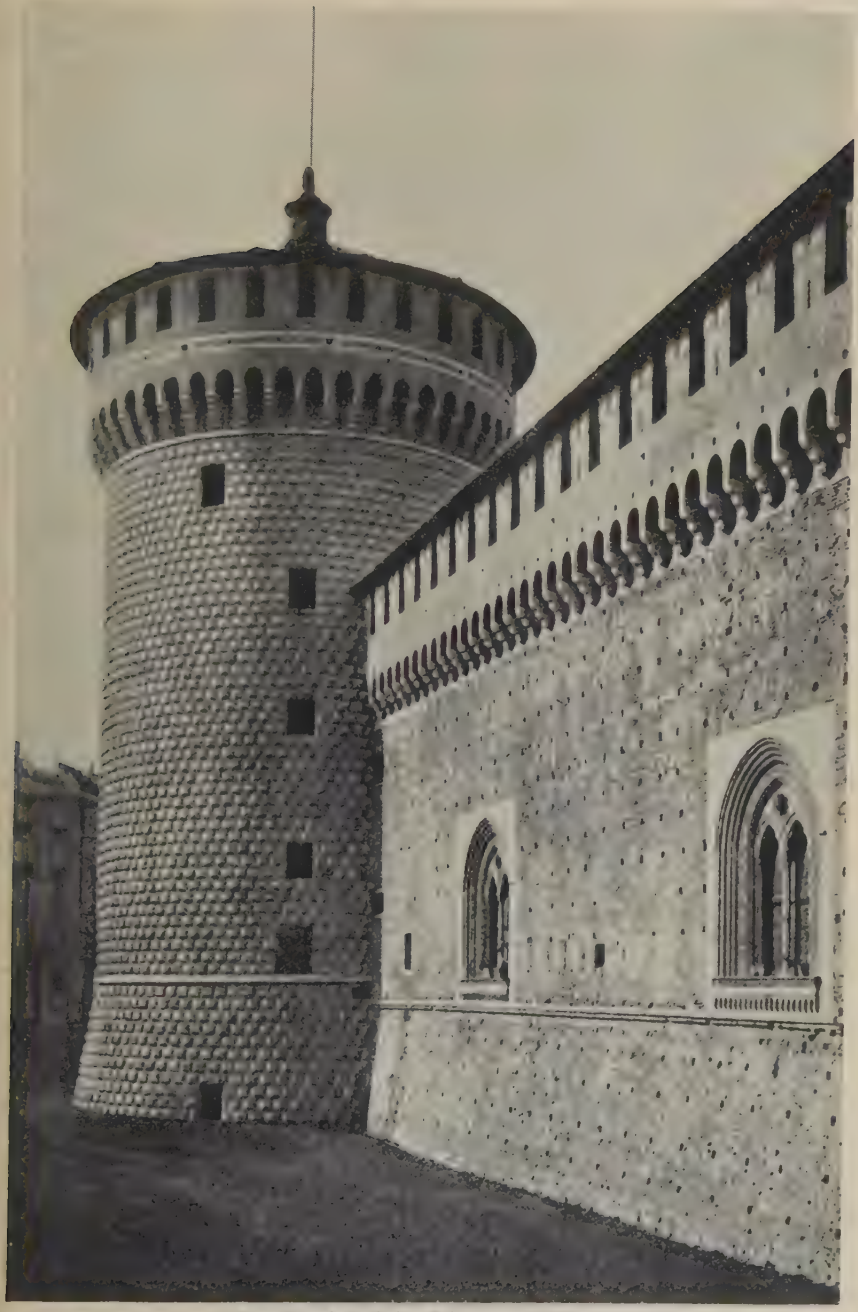
That vast, fortress-like structure, the Castle of Milan, is characteristic of the Sforza family who built it—as most of these conquerors did—on the ruins of the stronghold of their predecessors, in this case, the Visconti. The Sforza were the descendants of the condottiere, Muzio Attendolo of Romagna, whose physical strength had earned him the name of *Sforza*. His son, Francesco, evidently inherited the family talent for strategy. For, three years after the Milanese appointed him Military Defender of their newly-established Republic, he had himself proclaimed Duke of Milan (1450).

The Sforza immediately set about organizing their court on a scale of impressive grandeur. Music, like the other arts was so intelligently fostered that it not only afforded pleasant entertainment, but enhanced, by its excellence, the prestige of the ducal family.

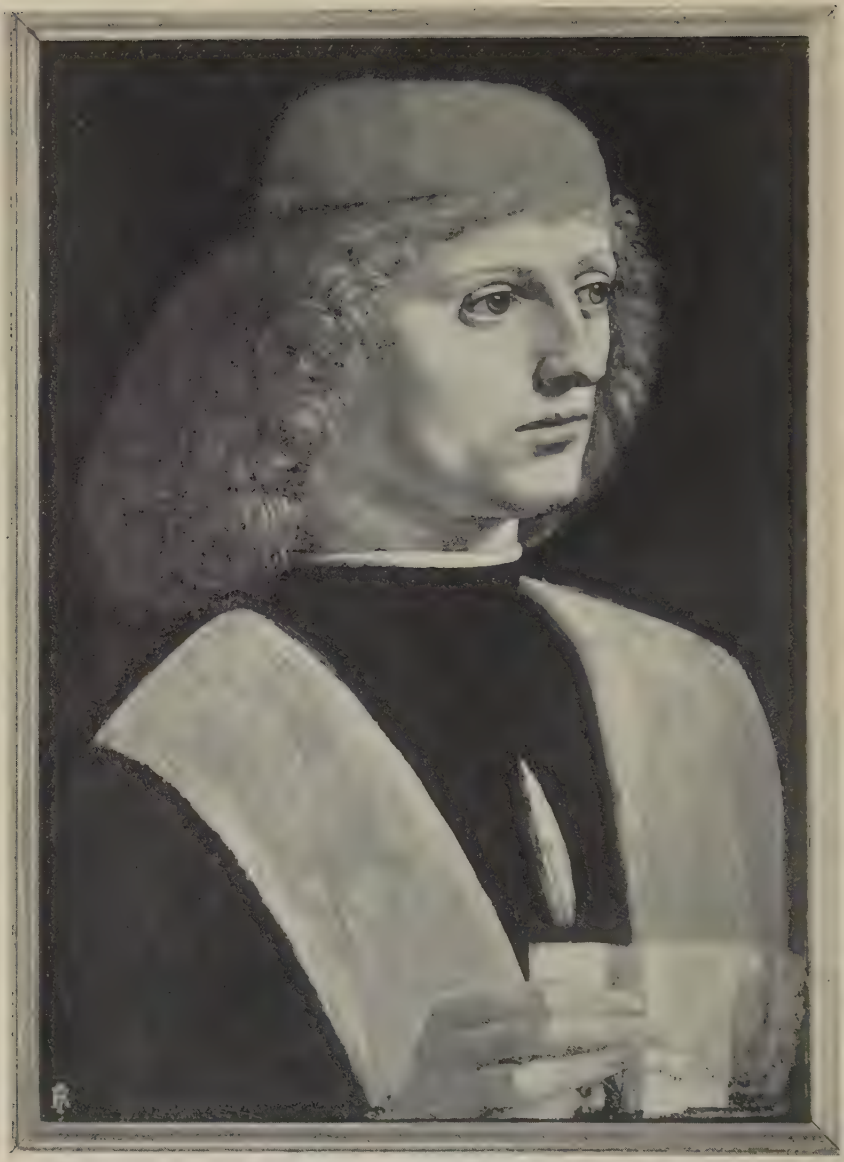
The most ancient musical traditions of Milan are connected with the Cathedral, which had been famous for its liturgical music since the days of St. Ambrose. The choir was a very early foundation, though the first mention of it in the Cathedral archives occurs in the year 1119.

It was in the middle of the fifteenth century, when Federico was planning his palace at Urbino, and the d'Este were inviting Flemish painters and musicians to their court at Ferrara, that the Sforza began their career as rulers of Milan and extensive neighbouring territories. Their early records make rare allusions to court musicians. In addition to the usual *Pifferi*, the first of the Sforza soldier-dukes kept a band of eighteen trumpeters collected from all parts of Italy, to judge by such names as: Pietro da Roma, Cristofero da Siena, Luigi da Milano, etc. Others, like Paolo Tedesco and Giovanni da Alamania, came from Germany, Belgium or Flanders; for such geographical terms were then used indiscriminately, and often inaccurately, for foreigners from any of the northern countries.

The second Duke, Galeazzo Maria, on his succession, immediately increased his musical household by engaging more singers and instrumentalists. He made a brave show when he visited neighbouring courts. On the occasion of his entry into Ferrara, his fifers and trumpeters were dressed in white cloth richly embroidered. And finding himself handicapped by the fact that all his *Pifferi* were in prison when he planned his ceremonial



The Castle of the Sforza at Milan.
(By permission of the Istituto Geografico De Agostini, Novara.)



"Il Musicista" attributed to Leonardo da Vinci. A possible portrait of Franchino Gafurio.

(By permission of the Rector of the Pinacoteca Ambrosiana, Milan.)

visit to Florence in 1470, he hired a band from Mantua, rather than appear at the Medici Court without his customary musical escort.

As in the other Renaissance courts, those delicate instruments, the lute, harp and lyre, so admired of Ariosto, "made the air vibrate to their sweet harmony." Nor was the ecclesiastical organ neglected. Tomaso degli Organi, Alessandro degli Organi, Gasparo dal'Organo and others whose names occur in the Sforza records were, according to the practice of that day, not only organists, but also organ-builders. They supplied instruments for the court chapel and for many of the city churches during the fifteenth century.

The real importance of the Sforza court in music dates from the foundation of their Chapel Choir, 1471-2. During his State visits to Florence, Ferrara and Mantua, Galeazzo Maria had been greatly struck by the evidences of musical activity at all these courts. The ambitious Sforza determined to outshine them all with his choir. There were so many Flemish musicians in Italy at this time, that he had no difficulty in finding thirty-three excellent *oltromontane* (foreign) singers. The choir was so efficiently organized that soon the Duke had no cause to be envious of the choir of Ferrara, nor even of the older foundations at Naples and Rome. Milan had the pick of the Flemish singers for, since it was the richest State in Italy, the Sforza could pay much higher salaries than their neighbours. Only the Papal Choir, to which it had always been a signal honour to belong, could hold its ground against the Sforza choir.

The musical household followed the Duke to his various residences and travelled in some state, the principal singers riding on horseback attended by ducal servants. They were dressed in rich costumes, for the sartorial element was considered of great importance at the court of Milan. Several entries in the Sforza accounts refer to velvet bought for the singers, usually black, but sometimes crimson or green; and costumes of peach colour, turquoise, or willow-green cloth are mentioned on other occasions.

Elaborate mural decorations were carried out in the great halls of the castle about 1474, which illustrated various ceremonies and included portraits of the chief personalities at the Sforza court. One fresco, now unfortunately obliterated, showed the ducal choir. The scene depicted was the blessing of the Sforza standard in the Cathedral Chapel of St. George; and the members of the choir wearing "their turquoise-blue costumes and their hoods" were shown in the act of singing the responses.

It was customary for the Renaissance princes to lend one another their musicians for special occasions. When the Sforza flattered a neighbouring court by a request for a loan of some of their singers, the compliment was a dangerous one, as Iolande of Savoy discovered when Milan kept the pick of her choir. Even the powerful d'Este were not safe from their musical depredations. During a visit to Ferrara, Galeazzo Maria had admired the singing of Jachetto di Marville (or di Lorena), whom the Duchess had brought with her from Naples on her marriage. Jachetto was easily lured to the brilliant court of Milan. "Al mele va le mosche" (flies make for the honey), said the Sforza envoy, Cerutti, when Jachetto joined the Milan Court

Choir, which already included such celebrities as: Josquin des Près, Gaspar van Weerbecke, Cordier and young Alexander Agricola.

The Sforza were interested in any new type of music they happened to hear of. A few years later, Galeazzo Maria commissioned his Oratore (representative) at Venice to get all the latest Venetian songs "with their musical notes," copied out in a book for him; and ordered him to look out for a well-set-up boy of from twelve to fifteen years, with a good voice, who could sing them to his own accompaniment on the lute.

Such were the interests of the court to which young Beatrice d'Este came on her marriage in 1491. Her husband, Ludovico Il Moro, while governing nominally in the name of his nephew, Gian Galeazzo, was the virtual ruler of Milan; though he only acquired the title of Duke three years later, on his nephew's death.

Both Ludovico and Beatrice were very fond of music; they were in constant touch with the musical life at the court of Beatrice's father, Duke Ercole of Ferrara, and weekly letters to and from Mantua kept them informed of Isabella's plans. The two sisters rivalled each other in the magnificence of their establishments and vied with each other in securing the services of celebrated artists. They lavished money with incredible extravagance on every scheme that was calculated to increase their prestige. The result was that, in spite of their riches, the letters of the d'Este family (thousands of which are preserved in the archives of Milan, Mantua and Modena), constantly reiterate the lament: "sono senza un soldo!" (I haven't a penny!).

In addition to trained Flemish singers, skilled in the intricacies of polyphonic music, many native instrumentalists entertained the Milan court and sang settings of the verses of classical and contemporary poets to lute or lyre. Beatrice had brought with her from Ferrara, Niccolò da Correggio, a poet and musician, who set Virgil and Petrarch to music; and Jacopo di Sansecondo, the celebrated viol player, was a permanent member of the Sforza household. Beatrice had musical instruments of every kind made for her by Lorenzo Gusnasco of Pavia which, being richly carved and inlaid with ivory, ebony and silver were, even from the purely decorative point of view, works of art. For Gusnasco held that beauty of form and artistic finish show the perfection of the instrument: "ne la forma sta il tutto," he was wont to say.

One of the numerous artists employed by the Sforza was the sculptor, Gian Cristofero Romano, whose famous bust of Beatrice is now in the Louvre. Gian Cristofero was also a good musician and in such constant demand as a lutenist, that he was often forced to abandon sculpture for music. After seeing his bust of Beatrice, Isabella asked that Gian Cristofero be allowed to go to Mantua to do one of herself. The Sforza having graciously consented, Isabella ordered the block of marble; but she waited in vain for the sculptor. Gian Cristofero had even been obliged to abandon his work at the Certosa of Pavia, in order to travel in Beatrice's suite in his capacity as lutenist; so seriously was his secondary profession of "virtuoso della musica" taken by his patrons. Castiglione, who spent seven years of his

youth at the court of Milan and knew all the brilliant company of artists the Sforza had gathered about them, introduced Gian Cristofero Romano into the group of Urbino courtiers whose discussions he chronicled in his famous work.

The name of one of the most noteworthy Italian musicians of the fifteenth century is connected with the days of the Sforza dominion. The theoretician, Franchino Gafurio of Lodi (a little town in the Sforza territory) made his way to many parts of Italy and won fame even in distant Naples; but Milan was the scene of his most important musical activities. Like many of the Flemish musicians, the Italian Gafurio was a priest, and eventually became rector of one of the Milan churches. He had all the versatility that was expected of the musician in those days; being a singer, a composer, and for some time choir-master at Milan Cathedral, as well as Professor at the University of Pavia. In 1485, Ludovico Il Moro brought Gafurio back to Milan, where he founded the Milan school of music. It was on his theoretical writings that his fame chiefly rested. One of the first books on a musical subject that ever appeared in print was Gafurio's *Practica Musicæ*, printed in Milan in 1496. Amongst other details, it describes the notes and the corresponding rests then in use, which underwent little alteration until the end of the sixteenth century.

A portrait attributed to Leonardo da Vinci, which now hangs in the Pinacoteca Ambrosiana, Milan, shows a musician in the costume designed for the famous choir founded by Duke Galeazzo Maria. Some authorities are of opinion that this man in the black velvet suit and red cap, holding in his hand a book of manuscript music on which the notes are fairly clearly indicated, is Franchino Gafurio. If authentic, this is one of the few portraits of fifteenth-century Italian musicians in existence. It is, however, sometimes described as an early portrait of Leonardo himself who was also musically inclined.

Jacopo di Sansecondo, whose viol playing was the delight of all the Italian courts, was a particular favourite at Milan, and rarely allowed to absent himself as long as Ludovico Il Moro was in power. It was then considered a delicate attention to send a musician to entertain a friend who was away from home on a journey. But the Sforza, who were so fond of borrowing the musicians of neighbouring courts, were careful not to let their own stay away too long. On one occasion, Beatrice became anxious at the length of time her sister kept Sansecondo. The letter in which she asks Isabella to send back the viol player reads rather like a tactful request to an absent-minded friend for the return of a favourite book. "Your Ladyship, having now returned home, will probably not require Jacopo di Sansecondo so much," wrote Beatrice. "I should be glad if She would send him back to us at once, in order that my Illustrious Consort may have some entertainment during the slight attack of tertian fever from which he is suffering."

When the Renaissance Lords received important foreigners at their courts or went abroad on visits of State, they lost no opportunity of impressing other princes with their wealth and refinement. While giving thought

to every detail of costume and equipment, so as to achieve the maximum of splendour, they did not neglect to add to their prestige by showing off their best musicians. Beatrice was only eighteen years old when her husband sent her to Venice on a diplomatic errand. He needed the aid of the Signoria, and judged that his brilliant young wife would be his best ambassador. The costumes of Beatrice and her suite were fabulously magnificent. Ludovico also sent the best of his singers, partly to entertain his wife during her absence, and partly to impress the Venetians. Daily letters from Beatrice kept him informed of the incidents of the journey, her arrival at Venice and her interview with the Signoria. She gives an account of the ceremonial of her reception by the Doge (when she wore her "gold brocade dress embroidered with crimson doves"); and she tells of the Mass at San Marco at which all the Venetian notabilities assisted and during which the Milan Choir sang. The impression they made was no doubt all the greater because Venice had hitherto held somewhat aloof from the Renaissance movement and was less familiar than other states with the wonders of the Flemish polyphonic art.

"Our singers did their part very well," wrote Beatrice to her husband. "Their performance delighted the Doge and all." Perhaps the music softened the hearts of the Signoria, for Beatrice gained some of her points. She remarked that "Cordier's singing was particularly admired." Cordier, a native of Bruges, who had belonged to the original choir at its foundation, had just returned to Milan. When he went home to Flanders a few years later, Ludovico commissioned him to send him some good singers for his choir. For, in spite of the natural vocal talent of the Italians, the Flemish were still greatly sought after on account of their contrapuntal knowledge.

The glory of the Sforza was nearing its end. Four years after the Venetian journey, Beatrice died, at the age of twenty-two; and, as Baldassare Castiglione records, the court of Milan, bereft of her vivid personality, rapidly declined. Ludovico, who had depended to a great extent on her popularity and cleverness for the success of his ambitious plans, seemed suddenly to lose heart. Taken prisoner, in 1500, by Louis the Twelfth of France, Ludovico Il Moro died in his French prison eight years later, remembering, no doubt, with bitterness the days when, from his magnificent fortress-castle, he had ruled autocratically over the prosperous Duchy of Milan.

CHAPTER VII

MUSIC AT THE COURT OF MANTUA

Isabella d'Este, relegated by her marriage to the quieter atmosphere of the court of Mantua, may have envied her younger sister her brilliant life in the great city of Milan. But Beatrice's influence was ephemeral; whilst Isabella, for fifty years Marchioness of Mantua, became one of the great figures of the Renaissance movement. Her natural gifts were developed by her intercourse with the many famous people she attracted to the Gonzaga court. Poets, artists and musicians were encouraged and inspired by Isabella's keen interest in all intellectual subjects.

Mantua comes last in the list of these four important Renaissance courts, not because it is the least of them, but because it outlived the others. The courts of Urbino and Milan had long ceased to be when Mantua was at the height of its glory, and its fame outlasted that of Ferrara, which was originally its mentor in matters artistic and musical.

The Mantua of to-day is a quiet country town to which the traveller is chiefly attracted by the Mantegna frescoes in church and palace. But the old town, and above all the Gonzaga palace, can offer the student of the Renaissance period something more. He who wishes to recapture the spirit of those days will find the task easier here than at Milan or Ferrara; for the ducal palace of Mantua, and the adjoining castle-fortress, have been little altered during the three centuries that have elapsed since the Gonzaga rule ended.

It is easy for the imagination to repeople these spacious halls with the crowd of courtiers and artists that once filled them. All the furnishings and art treasures have disappeared long since. But, in escaping reconstruction, the vast rooms have retained something of their bygone atmosphere. The ceilings, whether vaulted and covered with paintings, or glowing with carved and gilded coffering, are those at which the Gonzaga gazed. The walls, though their frescoes have faded, have kept much of their lovely colouring; and some of the subjects depicted perpetuate incidents in the lives of those vital and interesting people. In the Camera degli Sposi (The Bridal Chamber), members of the Gonzaga family live on in Mantegna's frescoes. Ludovico the Third goes a-riding, sits in state surrounded by his family, or sallies forth to meet his son the Cardinal; while his wife, Barbara of Brandenburg, looks down from the ceiling on the family scenes.

Isabella d'Este's tiny secret garden is still there, and the tilting ground where the knights showed their prowess; beyond it is the lake on which mock naval battles were fought, whilst the court looked on from a lovely arcaded loggia. The autumn mists, blowing in from the lake and from Virgil's Mincio, help the fancy to visualize the figures of those whose lives were spent in these picturesque surroundings.

Like the Montefeltro of Urbino, most of the Gonzaga of Mantua were wise rulers and patrons of learning. Somewhere near the palace (the exact site is now unknown), stood the Casa Zoiosa, Vittorino da Feltre's ideally-planned school, where music played such an important part in the educational scheme. Vittorino's pupil, Joannes the Carthusian, who wrote theoretical works, had, in his turn, a disciple in Franchino Gafurio. Gafurio came to Mantua when he was twenty-one, and "worked day and night at musical problems," so great was his desire to acquire all the knowledge of Joannes. To Vittorino da Feltre, who so strongly influenced Federico of Urbino, can also be attributed the interest taken in the intellectual movement by the Gonzaga princes of the fifteenth century.

Apart from the troubadour, Sordello, poet, singer and musician, Mantua does not figure in the earliest annals of music. But, once the awakening came, Mantua, stimulated by the example of Ferrara, developed rapidly.

Prior to the arrival of the Flemish polyphonists, the Gonzaga records show that their chief organized group of musicians was their band of wind-instruments, of which they were very proud. To it, evidently, belonged those musicians whose names are vaguely given as Gianfranco Trombetto and Giovanni Trombone. But, by the end of the fifteenth century, the new currents of music had reached Mantua; the Flemish had arrived, and polyphonic singing was in vogue.

Although behind Ferrara in general musical development, Mantua showed a certain spirit of enterprise. It has the distinction of being the first town in which a secular drama in the Italian language was performed with musical interludes (framezzi). This work, which was regarded as the first music drama was Poliziano's *Orfeo*; a subject of such musical interest that it was later to attract many opera composers. During his sojourn at Mantua, the poet Poliziano lived and moved among the people whom Mantegna has immortalized in the beautiful frescoes that adorn the castle walls. It was Ludovico's son, Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga, who commissioned him to write his *Orfeo* which was performed at Mantua with great ceremony and splendour in 1472. Many of the Renaissance nobles were present, including Galeazzo Maria Sforza. Possibly this artistic triumph of the Gonzaga was responsible for the Duke of Milan's determination to establish a choir such as none of the other courts could surpass.

At this period, Mantua, though possessing fine painters and poets, still lacked good musicians, and looked for guidance to well-equipped Ferrara. When Ludovico the Third, the pupil of Vittorino, wanted a music teacher for his children, he wrote to ask the advice of Nicolò Tedesco of Ferrara. The Flemish musician recommended a compatriot of his own "who has the modern style and sings very well, being especially good at Venetian airs," which were then the height of the fashion. Again, when Gianandrea di Alessandro, organist at Mantua, desired to perfect himself in organ playing and singing, it was to Ferrara he went, to the school of Corrado Piffero; as in Germany, the official Master-Fifers were good all-round musicians and taught all the principal instruments.

An interesting detail concerning this same Gianandrea is to be found in a letter written to him many years later by Aretino. The poet suggests that Gianandrea, whom he hails as "a shining light of the musical world," should make a harpsichord for the painter Titian—who was a great lover of music—and that Titian should in return paint the musician's portrait. But there is unfortunately no record to show that this artistic exchange ever took place.

In spite of the supremacy of Ferrara and the jealous watch Milan kept on talented foreigners, Mantua sometimes managed to get hold of a musical marvel. It was rumoured at one time that the Gonzaga had, at their court, a blind German who could play all the instruments with equal skill. The ever-watchful Duke of Milan expressed a polite wish that the German be sent on a visit to Milan, so that he might have the opportunity of admiring his versatility. But Ludovico Gonzaga of Mantua knew well from experience what the result of such a visit would be. He replied diplomatically that the blind German was full of whimsical notions, and so convinced that the Italian musicians wanted to poison him, that he would touch no food but what had been prepared for him by the women-in-waiting of his daughter-in-law, Margaret of Bavaria. So the Gonzaga kept their musician.

When Ludovico's grandson, Francesco, married Isabella d'Este, in 1490, the ties between Mantua and Ferrara were strengthened, and a brilliant artistic period was inaugurated at the Gonzaga court. The sixteen-year-old bride had not yet had much time for musical study. As Marchioness of Mantua, she set herself to acquire a wider knowledge of art and literature and she kept up a practical interest in all such subjects during the whole of her long life.

A few months after her marriage, Isabella, having decided to learn singing, wrote home to Ferrara and asked her father, Duke Ercole d'Este, to send her his musician, Don Giovan Martin, a native of Armentières. Don Giovan spent a while at Mantua giving the young Marchioness music lessons; and on his return to Ferrara, he continued his tuition by letter, sending his pupil new songs and recommending her "to go over and over them, till she was note perfect."

Music, which had still to be copied out by hand, was scarce and valuable. Ferrara was rich in manuscripts; so Isabella obtained a loan of her father's collection of songs and had them copied out in Mantua. The letters between the various members of the d'Este family make frequent mention of composers, singers, organists, and lutenists and show that they all took a keen interest in music.

Isabella's musical studies were not limited to singing. She learnt to play several instruments, such as the lute, lyre and clavichord; and she vied with her sister, Beatrice, in collecting beautiful specimens. She wrote to her agent in Venice, in June 1493, asking him to look out for a small *citharra* or get one made for her, as she wanted to learn to play the instrument. On the same day, she wrote to Atelante, the lute-maker, in Florence, commissioning him to make her a lute "with as many strings as he thinks

fit." For these instruments were not yet standardized and there was great diversity as regards shape, size and the number of strings.

At Pavia, in the Duchy of Milan, lived Lorenzo Gusnasco, who made wonderful instruments of precious woods, beautifully carved and inlaid. From him, too, Isabella ordered a lute and also a clavicembalo (an instrument of the harpsichord type) which, she stipulated, was to be exactly the same as one he had made for her sister, Beatrice. She warned him that it must be "easy to play on; because Our hands have such a light touch, that We cannot play well if the keys are heavy and We have to strain Our fingers."

Among the many lutes owned by the Marchioness of Mantua, was one which had been made for her by a friar belonging to one of the monasteries of the town, and which was elaborately inlaid with ivory, ebony and silver. This beautiful instrument was seen by Fétis, in 1807, but there is no trace of it now. This favourite domestic instrument of Renaissance days does not sound very effective to modern ears. Old writers, however, wax enthusiastic over the performance of celebrated contemporary lutenists, and declare that the sounds they produced were so exquisite that they "ravished the senses of the listeners" ("ruban i sensi di chi l'ascolta").

Shortly after her marriage, Isabella engaged Giovanni Testagrossa, a celebrated lutenist, to teach her the instrument, so that she could accompany herself when she sang. Like other Renaissance ladies, she was willing to display her musical talents in public and sang at the festivities given at Ferrara in honour of her brother Alfonso's marriage to Lucrezia Borgia.

She seems to have learnt the viol, too, for she sent Testagrossa to examine some viols she was having made at Brescia, a town to become famous in the history of the violin, which was already noted for its instrument makers. Though devoted to Isabella, Testagrossa liked an occasional change of scene. He was often lured away to other courts, but, after a short absence, was always glad to return to Mantua. Isabella, who naturally resented his desertions, refused to take him back after his fourth escapade. Testagrossa tried hard to persuade her. He promised that he would train up a fine band of lutes and viols for the court of Mantua, and offered her a great many instruments for her collection, among them: "his own best lute, two bigger ones, five excellent viols, a case of flutes and a bassoon." But not even these tempting offers could propitiate the offended Marchioness.

Other good musicians were, however, content to remain for years at the Gonzaga court. One of Isabella's favourites was Bartolomeo Tromboncino, whose father belonged to the Pifferi of Venice. Bartolomeo was one of the few Italians to make a name for himself during that era of Flemish supremacy. His compositions consisted chiefly of *Frottole*, *Strambotte* and *Belzerette*, the popular part-songs of the day; many being set to poems which Isabella wrote for him herself or collected from her literary friends. Bartolomeo's sojourn at Mantua came to a sudden end when he killed his wife in a fit of jealousy.

The most faithful of all the Gonzaga musicians was Marchetto Cara,

Castello San Giorgio. Part of the Ducal Palace of Mantua.
(Photo: Claudio Pelloni, Mantua.)

Jacopo di San Secondo playing the Viol; detail from Raphael's "Parnaso."
(Photo: Alinari, Florence)

singer and composer, who spent thirty years at their court. Cara held an xceptional position for, after the departure of Bartolomeo, he had no rival t Mantua. The *Strambotta* was his favourite song type. When Isabella vent to visit her sister in Milan in 1495, the Marquess Francesco sent his vife "a new *Strambotta* of Cara's" to let the Sforza see what good composers Mantua possessed.

Francesco Gonzaga shared his wife's love of music. But he could not evote much time to it for, like most of the Renaissance rulers, he was requently engaged in warfare against neighbouring States. When the Marquess was away on some leisurely expedition, Marchetto accompanied im and entertained him in the evenings. But, if things looked serious, s they did when Francesco commanded the troops of the Venetian Republic vhich had formed a league against Charles the Eighth of France, there was o time for music, and Marchetto Cara was sent home to Mantua.

Isabella sometimes lent him to friends or relations who needed cheering p. When her sister-in-law, Elisabetta, the wife of Guidobaldo of Urbino, vent to Venice to seek aid against the usurper, Cæsar Borgia, Isabella sent Marchetto Cara to distract the music-loving Duchess from her worries 'per procurarle uno svago"). Along with Cara, she despatched a woman nger, Giovanna. "So beautifully do these two sing," declared Isabella, that those who have an opportunity of hearing them are indeed fortunate" 'beato cho li po sentire").

Mantua was one of the towns where the secular part-song flourished est. A book of songs published by Petrucci, in 1505, contains *Frottole* and *trambotte* by Bartolomeo Tromboncino and Marchetto Cara; and such ocal composers as Papin da Mantova and Rossino Mantovano are also epresented in Petrucci's first collection of *Frottole*. For the performance of ich vocal music, the Gonzaga kept a number of good singers, the most mous at this period being Narciso de Mainardi and Roberto da Rimini. fter the fall of the Sforza, Giacomo di Sansecondo, the viol player, who had ways been a favourite visitor at Mantua, settled there permanently and was nt occasionally to the courts of Ferrara and Urbino. It may have been n one of his visits to Urbino that Raphael conceived the idea of painting ansecondo as Apollo, singing and accompanying himself on the viol, s he appears in the well-known picture in the Vatican Gallery.

As regards choir singing, Mantua was behindhand until 1510, when rancesco Gonzaga commissioned Jachetto di Lorena to choose and train ngers for the Court Chapel. On the occasion of their first performance, a ear later, crowds came from all parts to hear them. But the Gonzaga did ot find it easy to keep a good choir together. When news reached Mantua, few years later, that one of the music-loving Medici had been elected Pope eo X), the entire choir wanted to set out immediately for Rome where ey felt they would have more scope for their talents. The Marquess only revented this catastrophe by appealing to the Pope, who contented him-lf with one of the Mantuan singers, Michele da Lucca, no doubt the best f them.

When new singers were needed to fill gaps in the choir, Isabella's singing teacher, Don Giovan, was often able to supply them from Ferrara. On one occasion, he sent her a highly-recommended French soprano, Charles de Launay. Evidently life at Mantua did not suit the singer, for he suddenly disappeared one day, carrying off with him one of Isabella's most precious books of manuscript music, a collection of the compositions of Alexander Agricola, one of the few Germans among the northern musicians.

Immediately, the hue and cry was raised. Launay was traced to Ferrara. From there he escaped to Florence and offered his services to Piero de' Medici, to whom he generously presented Isabella's treasured manuscript. Full of wrath, the Marchioness wrote to her father's representative at Florence requesting the return of the music and demanding that Launay be severely dealt with. The book was sent back to Isabella. But the singer had succeeded in captivating Piero de' Medici who, if he showed poor judgment as a ruler, knew how to appreciate music. He refused to punish Launay, giving as his reason that "when people of such rare talent appear on earth, we should respect them and treat them with affection." In order to appease Isabella, Piero had three books of new Masses copied out for her; unfortunately, the letter that accompanied them does not give the composers' names.

Isabella collected musical manuscripts with as much enthusiasm as she did instruments. Many were elaborately bound. The inventory of her books mentions a collection of French music written on vellum and bound in turquoise velvet with silver ornamentation, and a book of songs, bound in red leather and gold. Another precious possession was a manuscript copy of the works of Franchino Gafurio.

When Isabella d'Este, having governed the Duchy of Mantua for her son after the death of her husband, retired at last from public life, she fitted out two tiny rooms for herself. They are known as her *camerini*, and their dimensions are in curious contrast to the vastness of the rooms in which she had hitherto lived. Perhaps this taste was inspired by a desire for something small and intimate where she could escape from ceremonial and from the company of courtiers. But, on a damp autumn day, when the visitor to the palace shivers in those enormous halls and stairways, he wonders whether it was not merely for the sake of warmth that Isabella, in her old age, withdrew to those two little rooms where she gathered about her all her most treasured possessions. Her valuable art collections have been scattered long since; they included a series of portraits of Isabella painted by the greatest artists of the period. She was personally in touch with most of them. Mantegna, Francia, the Bellini, Perugino, Correggio, da Vinci, Raphael, Giulio Romano, Titian; all executed commissions for her, or were at least in correspondence with her. And she managed to get her orders carried out punctually, by flattering the famous artists, and by threatening the lesser lights even with imprisonment if the works were not ready on the appointed date.

Like Federico of Urbino's *studiolo*, Isabella's inner *camerino* still exhibits,

on walls and ceiling, mementoes of her musical tastes. Here, too, the wainscoting is decorated with pictures in marquetry showing a viol, lute and harp; but the craftsman was less skilful than the one Federico employed. The most interesting design is to be seen on the coffered ceiling, where the gilding still glitters against a background of blue. Here Isabella flaunted her *impresa*, a symbolic device used by the Renaissance Intellectuals to indicate their tastes and hobbies. Isabella's *impresa* shows her musical bent. A golden five-line stave bears the C clef on the middle line; then, one under the other, come four time-signatures of the circle variety; while the various rest-signs, whose values Franchino Gafurio had recently determined, are arranged on the remainder of the stave in a neat symmetrical design. An *impresa* was often used on banner or cloak; Isabella had hers embroidered on her dress for one festive occasion.

There are many evidences of her active interest in music and musicians in the hundreds of letters this energetic lady found time to write or dictate. The ancient ink is now rusty and faded; the paper, brittle with age, is often frayed at the edges; but the curiously modern-looking, artistically-formed handwriting, is still perfectly legible. Many Italian archives contain examples of her widespread correspondence. Her brother, the Cardinal, received Latin epistles from his "obediens soror Isabella Marchionessa Mantuæ"; and the letters addressed to her "most illustrious, excellent and beloved son, Federico," still bear beautiful seals, the detail of which is wonderfully clear.

The musical standards established by Isabella were maintained by the three succeeding generations of Gonzaga rulers. When her grandson, Guglielmo—himself something of a composer—took over the government, in the middle of the sixteenth century, the court of Mantua possessed an excellent composer and choir-master in Jachet de Wert. He had lived there so long, that his Flemish origin was almost forgotten, and he was often called "Jachet da Mantova." Wert's post was considered a very lucrative one; for the Duke paid him a hundred crowns a year, and allowed him free residence, "board expenses for two people ('spesa di due bocche') and medicines as required." Besides the sacred music he composed for the ducal choir, Wert wrote *villanelle* and *madrigals* for the court ladies who took up choral singing with great enthusiasm in the second half of the sixteenth century and entered into keen competition with the ladies of Ferrara.

From an account of the performances of the rival choirs given by Vincenzo Giustiniani, in 1575, one gathers that they had a sound idea of vocal technique. Among the details Giustiniani singles out for praise are their renderings of such effects as: crescendo, decrescendo, rallentando, staccato; long and short trills; soft passages, "interrupted by a broken sigh," or an "answering echo." In addition, he mentions their very distinct enunciation, their appropriate facial expression and control of bodily gestures. When amateurs aimed at such a standard, it is not surprising that the art of singing soon flourished in Italy.

Like most Italian towns at that period, Mantua had a meeting place for the local intellectuals: the "Accademia degli Invaghiti," founded in 1586.

It was devoted to the cultivation of the two still-inseparable arts of poetry and music.

A great change took place in general musical conditions during the reign of Guglielmo Gonzaga. The Flemish no longer held the musical field unchallenged. Italy was beginning to create a great music of her own, of which Venice and Rome were the chief centres; and the first outstanding Italian composer had appeared: Palestrina, who ranks with the greatest in the history of music.

Duke Guglielmo commissioned Palestrina to write a Mass for his choir, and did his best to induce the composer to come to Mantua. But Palestrina refused on the score that his appointment would prejudice his pupil, Soriano, who was already in the ducal service. The Duke, who was a warm admirer of the Roman School, also tried in vain to tempt Luca Marenzio to abandon Rome for Mantua. In his desire to collect good singers for his choir, Guglielmo, on more than one occasion, narrowly escaped diplomatic complications with important personages belonging to the Venetian and Roman nobility.

It is evident, from the collection of church music, originally belonging to the Gonzaga, which is now preserved in the Library of the Milan Conservatoire, that their excellent court choir sang the masterpieces of the Flemish and Italian contrapuntal schools. The collection, which comprises several hundred works, includes a number of MSS as well as early printed music. Amongst the rare first editions are some five-part Masses by Josquin des Près and Heinrich Isaac, published by Petrucci at Venice, in 1502. The print is beautiful, and each part is bound in a little separate volume, but some parts are unfortunately missing. There are Masses by Palestrina; *Motets* and masses by the Venetian, Andrea Gabrieli and by "the most excellent Jachet de Wert"; and the Gonzaga themselves are represented by musical settings of the Psalms by Duke Francesco and Duke Guglielmo.

Guglielmo's successor, Duke Vincenzo, the last of the Gonzaga to rule at Mantua, had among his musicians a young viola-player of Cremona, named Claudio Monteverdi, who was destined to become the first great Italian Opera composer. His career was no doubt influenced to some extent by the fact that Vincenzo's marriage to Eleanora de' Medici brought Mantua, during those last brilliant years of the Gonzaga rule, into touch with the Florentine developments in the music drama. It was at Mantua that Monteverdi's first opera, *Orfeo*, was performed in 1607—a hundred and thirty-five years after the court of Mantua had witnessed the production of a drama by Poliziano on the same subject, with incidental music. A few years later, the death of Duke Vincenzo brought the rule of the Gonzaga at Mantua to an abrupt end; and with this last of the Renaissance courts, a great period ended.

CHAPTER VIII

MUSIC IN FLORENCE UNDER THE MEDICI
DEVELOPMENTS IN PADUA, BOLOGNA, NAPLES

One after the other, the Renaissance courts vanished, as the reigning dynasties became extinct, or as their territory was wrested from them by great powers, such as Spain, France or the Papal States.

Under changing social conditions, the big towns achieved an independent artistic life; and gradually, a mature Italian art, manifested in a variety of important musical forms, developed, from the mid-sixteenth century onwards, principally in Venice, Rome, Florence, and Naples. Prior to this period of maturity, signs of early activity can be traced in a number of towns throughout Italy, particularly in Florence, Naples, Bologna and Padua; developments which, though of lesser significance, are noteworthy, forming as they do an integral part of national musical experience.

After the early flowering of music in the fourteenth century, Florence was, for a time, unproductive; there, as elsewhere, the native composers were overwhelmed by the influx of northern musicians of more mature technical powers. But in the mid-fifteenth century Florence renewed its musical energies. Whilst Milan, Mantua and Ferrara came under the sway of the Renaissance nobles, the free town of Florence was too independent to become the property of a single family. Those astute and wealthy merchant-princes, the Medici, managed, however, during four generations, to hold a position of such supremacy in the Florentine bourgeois oligarchy, that they made themselves, all but in name, the rulers of the Commune; and their court was equal in splendour to that of any contemporary prince.

True sons of Florence, the Medici were lovers of literature, art and music. It was in the days of Cosimo de' Medici, the founder of the family prestige, that Pope Eugene the Fourth came to Florence to consecrate the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore, in 1436. He brought with him the Papal Choir which counted among its members the famous Guillaume Dufay, who had written for the occasion the *motet:* "Nuper rosarum flores." The Medici kept in touch with the great composer whom posterity was to regard as "the Morning Star" of the Netherland School and who later, on his return to Cambrai, sent singers to Piero de' Medici.

A book of Italian and French songs, which belonged originally to Cosimo de' Medici and found its way later into the Urbino Library, shows that the Medici were familiar with the most noted musicians of the first half of the fifteenth century. The MS contains songs by those forerunners of the Netherland School: Ciconia, Bincoys, Dunstaple, and the great Dufay.

In the second half of the fifteenth century, during the lifetime of Lorenzo the Magnificent, the most brilliant member of this remarkable family, Florence reached the apogee of its power and artistic influence. Lorenzo had grown up in a propitious atmosphere. His mother, Lucrezia Tornabuoni, loved music; and she herself wrote many of the songs she taught her children. Lorenzo, who inherited her talents, was a poet and musician of no mean attainments.

Although the Flemish musicians were in the ascendant during the fifteenth century, Florence had a worthy representative in Antonio Squarcialupi, organist at the cathedral and owner of the unique MS collection of fourteenth-century songs already mentioned. "This book," says the title page, "belongs to Antonio Squarcialupi, organist at Santa Maria del Fiore." The MS, which immortalizes the early composers of Florence, Bologna, Perugia, Padua, etc., contains no music by Squarcialupi himself. Although the biographer, Negri, says that he left "several musical compositions," no works of his have so far come to light. He would seem to be the first example of a musician who gained widespread fame as a virtuoso. People came from far and near to hear the improvisations of Squarcialupi, whose playing was the pride of Florence. Although the organ had grown in size since the days of the blind Landini, the instrument was still so small, according to our standards, that it must have sounded very faint in the vast cathedral. Yet it satisfied the fifteenth century music-lovers of Florence to whom great volumes of musical sound were unknown. The good acoustics of the Florentine Cathedral and the effectiveness of the singing to be heard there, are praised by the celebrated contemporary architect, Leone Battista Alberti. In a beautiful passage in his essay, "della tranquillità dell'Anima," he describes the sense of spiritual peace (lentezza d'anima) he experienced in Santa Maria del Fiore, when listening to "the exquisite rising and falling of the sweet-toned undulating voices which expressed such a depth of sincerity and truth."

Like most medieval musicians, Squarcialupi began life as a singer. When young Galeazzo Maria Sforza of Milan visited the Medici at their villa at Carregi, outside Florence, he wrote his father an enthusiastic account of the singing and organ improvisations of Squarcialupi; alluding to him as "Maestro Antonio whom, I believe, Your Excellency knows, or must at least have heard of." The opinion of Maestro Antonio was highly valued in all musical matters. Before engaging a certain Johannes Tedesco, a German lute-player, Ludovico Il Moro sent him to Florence in order that Squarcialupi should pronounce on his attainments. The fame of the great organist extended far beyond the frontiers of Italy; and his correspondence with Guillaume Dufay links his name with the important musical developments in Flanders.

When Squarcialupi died in 1475, Lorenzo the Magnificent had him interred in the cathedral which had so often resounded to his music. Several poets, including Lorenzo himself, Poliziano, and Ficino, wrote verses in praise of the musician which were inserted at the beginning of the *Squarcialupi*

MS.[1] Their eulogies show that Antonio degli Organi was regarded as an important personage even in that brilliant group which formed the nucleus of the Florentine "Accademia," and included Poliziano, Pico della Mirandola, Ficino and Lorenzo de' Medici. Philosophy, poetry and music were discussed in turn by the society of artists and intellectuals which assembled, now at the Medici Villa at Carregi, now in the heart of the Forest of Camaldoli.

Music was at this period undergoing a great transformation. Since the days of Landini and his contemporaries, Italy had absorbed much of the Flemish musical science. But, while the fifteenth-century Italian composers had a greater knowledge of counterpoint than their predecessors, their kinship with the early Florentine School is still evident; for they retained the instinctive Italian feeling for melody, and they used simpler, less abstruse forms of counterpoint than those in which the more complicated northern mentality delighted.

Italian and Flemish musicians worked side by side in fifteenth-century Florence. Many of the former were Tuscans, as is seen by such names as Bartolomeo organista fiorentino, Alessandro fiorentino, Bernardo pisano. Amongst the foreigners who came there for brief periods were: the composer Obrecht, the great Josquin des Près, and Alexander Agricola, who spent most of his life in Italy.

After the death of Squarcialupi, his post as organist at the cathedral was given to a Flemish musician, Heinrich Isaac; he also taught music to Lorenzo de' Medici's three sons who were all talented amateurs. The eldest, Piero, Lorenzo's successor, showed as much interest in music as his father, but the weakness of his character brought about the downfall of the Medici. Giovanni, as Pope Leo X, was famous for his culture and his patronage of the arts; and the youngest son, Giuliano the Magnificent, was one of the courtiers represented by Castiglione as taking part in the musical discussions at Urbino. After Josquin des Près, Isaac was regarded as the greatest Flemish composer of that day, and his versatile talents won him wide-spread popularity.

Although he was born in Brabant, Heinrich Isaac was known in Italy as "Arrigo tedesco," because he was a subject of the Emperor Maximilian who was then the ruler of East Flanders. In 1497, when Isaac had been several years in Florence, Maximilian recalled him to his service and appointed him *Hofkomponist*. Innsbruck was the composer's headquarters; but he travelled a good deal and was for a long time at the Court of Ferrara.

After some years, Maximilian allowed Isaac to return to Florence. But,

[1] Lorenzo de' Medici's poem on Squarcialupi opens with the verse:

"Farete insieme O Musici lamento
Sopra il viro immortale oggi sepolto
Morte si scusa e dice: 'io ve l'ò tolto,
Per far più lieto il Ciel col suo concento'."

"All musicians join in lamenting the loss of the immortal man buried to-day. Death excuses itself by saying: I have taken him from you in order to increase the joys of Heaven with his music."

in addition to his musical activities, he was evidently expected to keep the Emperor informed of the political situation there. For, in a document of the period, Maximilian states that he is allowing him to go because "he will be more useful to Us at Florence than at Our Own Court."

Like many of the northern composers who settled in Italy, Isaac was either profoundly influenced by his environment, or else he deliberately adapted his style to the Italian taste. Besides church music, he composed three- and four-part songs for the carnival processions which Lorenzo revived on a scale of great magnificence, to indulge the Florentine love of pageantry. Lorenzo de' Medici himself wrote for these occasions a number of licentious poems which he had set to music by Isaac, Agricola and Bartolomeo Fiorentino. As the basis of his songs, Isaac sometimes took the melodies of those ancient carnival songs, the *Canti Carnascialeschi* which, like the *Maggi*, or *May Songs*, had been sung during the Florentine "Masks" and May Festivals from the most remote times. Some of these little carnival compositions were intended for purely instrumental use; viols and lutes, or viols, horns and trombones being the most common combinations.

The diary of the architect, Antonio di San Gallo, gives us an idea of the elaborate manner in which the Florentine carnival festivals were staged by Lorenzo de' Medici. He describes how the procession "set out after dinner and continued sometimes until three or four in the morning. A body of over three hundred masked horsemen in rich costumes took part. As many more followed on foot carrying lighted torches that made night brighter than day, providing a superb spectacle which delighted all beholders. In this manner they passed through the city, singing harmoniously in four, eight, twelve, and as many as fifteen parts, accompanied by all kinds of instruments; their songs, madrigals, barzelette and ballate, illustrating the subjects represented by the groups of pageantry."

The *Canti Carnascialeschi* were, musically speaking, a secular form of the religious *Laude* which had been sung in Tuscany for centuries past. Lorenzo the Magnificent, with a true instinct for the value of this ancient music of the people, revived the singing of *Laude* and wrote devotional poems for the use of contemporary composers. Many of the four-part *Laude* sung by the Florentine guilds that met every Saturday evening in the churches of Or San Michele and Santa Maria Novello were set to words of Lorenzo's; and old collections of hymns contain *Laude* by him and Christmas songs by his mother, Madonna Lucrezia.

Instrumental music also had its devotees in fifteenth-century Florence; lutes, viols, flutes, wooden horns and trombones were much in use. But, as in the previous century, the lute remained the favourite instrument. Pietro Aaron, a sixteenth-century Florentine writer on music, mentions several of the celebrated lutenists of those days. Florentine women, too, now began to make a name as performers, especially in connection with the popular *Canzone da Liuto*, the song to lute accompaniment.

We get some vivid glimpses of musical life and customs, in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, in the *Memoirs* of that very reluctant

amateur musician, Benvenuto Cellini. According to his own account, he was a good performer on the flute and the cornetto (a kind of wooden horn), thanks to his father's enthusiastic love of music of which he was the unwilling victim.

The father, Giovanni Cellini, sang and played the flute and the viola da braccio. He taught his son, when still a small child, to play the flute and sing "from the book—which I disliked intensely," remarks Benvenuto. He was, nevertheless, proud of his father's versatility, and boasts that he made "wonderful organs with wooden pipes, the best clavicembali that were to be found at that time, as well as viols, lutes and harps, that were most beautiful and excellent"; though a curious combination of engineering and ivory carving was Giovanni's regular means of livelihood.

Benvenuto's father played so well that the town Pifferi invited him to join them. Hearing of this, Lorenzo de'Medici and his son Piero immediately had him dismissed from the band lest he should neglect his carving, in which they were more interested. Thereupon, Giovanni hastened to reassure them by making a mirror with a frame of carved ivory and bone "of a most elegant pattern," with which the Medici were so pleased that they allowed him to rejoin the Pifferi. Cellini points out that this was a position of some distinction as the members of the band were artisans belonging to the honourable guilds of wool and silk weavers.

When Benvenuto studied the goldsmith's art at Bologna, the master to whom he was apprenticed was also a member of the local Pifferi. Cellini records that he had a daily music lesson and got on well with "that accursed playing." But, in spite of much persuasion, he firmly refused to become a professional musician, although he practised occasionally to please his father who constantly begged him not to neglect "his flute or his sweet-toned cornetto."

Thus Florence, the earliest Italian town to develop a characteristic "School" of composers, in the fourteenth century, maintained its interest in the art during the fifteenth century and cultivated all the forms of vocal and instrumental music then in vogue. Towards the close of the sixteenth century, it was to become the centre of a development which changed the currents of Italian music—the movement, fostered by a group of Florentine nobles and musicians, out of which the Opera was evolved.

Many other Italian towns did pioneer work in various branches of music. Each province or state, being a little world in itself, was apt to show some individual characteristic or preference. But there was hardly a town of any size that did not display some musical activity during the Renaissance period.

In very early times, the Italians showed a tendency to specialize in the study of the theoretical side of music, which was considered a much more suitable pursuit for serious musicians than the executive side, then limited to singing.

Padua, since medieval days a great centre of learning, naturally concerned itself chiefly with the "science" of music, which belonged to the mathemat-

ical group of the "Seven Liberal Arts" cultivated during the Middle Ages. Music was considered one of the most important of these sciences; indeed, Boethius held that without the study of music it was impossible to attain to the truth.

The laws which governed the mathematical art of music were supposed to form the basis of all the sciences. In his *History of Architecture*, Leone Battista Alberti states that when the numbers which represent the musical consonances are applied to architecture, the result "fills the eye and the soul with marvellous delight." Even students of medicine could not neglect this basic science. "Without the aid of music, how can medicine arrive at a knowledge of the harmony which is said to be innate in mortals?" asks a fourteenth-century Florentine.[1] It was natural, therefore, that Padua, celebrated for its great medieval schools of learning, should concentrate on the study of the theory of music.

Some of the most important early writers on music were natives of this town. At the end of the thirteenth century, Marchettus of Padua began to throw light on contemporary musical problems in his *Lucidarium*, which was followed by a second treatise, his *Pomarium*. A century later, another Paduan, Prosdocimus da Beldomandis, occupied himself, among other things, with the differences between the Italian and French notational systems. Thanks to these early theoretical writers, we have some idea of the different problems with which medieval musicians had to grapple, and we can trace the gradual building up of the theoretical structure on which the modern art of music rests.

The significance of this town as a centre of serious musicianship may be gauged from the fact that it attracted the first northern song composer, Jean Ciconia, a precursor of the Netherland School. It was to Padua that Ciconia of Liège came in the first decade of the fifteenth century, to publish his musical treatises; and there he found inspiration for some of his songs.

Another famous medieval university town, Bologna, was represented in the earliest development of Italian secular music by Jacopo da Bologna (Magister Jacobus a Bononia), who was sufficiently famous as a composer for his part-songs to be included in the *Squarcialupi MS*. This town, whose very architecture shows such marked individuality, had an organized musical life in the mid-fifteenth century. By then, the choir of the Basilica of San Petronio had been in existence for some time; for the town records mention the choir as being administered by the Signoria of Bologna. The school of singing and polyphony established there in 1482, was founded by a Spaniard, Ramis de Pareya of Salamanca. After his death his pupils, the chief of whom was Spataro, carried on his teaching of the contrapuntal art; and throughout the ensuing centuries, the town maintained its reputation for music.

Naples, although politically separated from the rest of Italy—having been under Spanish rule from the beginning of the fifteenth century—was

[1] Coluccio Salutate, Secretary to the Signoria of Florence, in a letter written on behalf of Francesco Landini to the Bishop of Florence.

in the forefront of the Italian musical movement. Naples prides itself on having possessed the earliest school of singing and counterpoint in all Italy, which was founded there in 1470 by the Flemish musician, Jean Tinctor, under the patronage of Ferdinand the First of Aragon, King of Naples. Tinctor was also made director of the Court Chapel Choir which had been in existence since the beginning of the fifteenth century. In order to procure more trained singers for the choir, he sent to his native Flanders, "al di là dei monti." From that far-off land, "beyond the mountains," came a number of musicians, the best-known of whom were Ycart and Garnier. And, as usually happened, their traditions were carried on by their Italian pupils, Scandelli and Dentice.

One of the churches of Naples, the "Annunziata," became a noted musical centre. The much-travelled Franchino Gafurio was the principal musician there towards the end of the fifteenth century; he was followed by a succession of good singers, organists and composers, both Flemish and Italian, the most noted of whom were: da Nola, De Macque, Lambardi and Stella.

Secular music, too, flourished early in Naples. The instruments were much in favour, and the town supplied lutenists and guitarists to many of the northern Courts. Antonio Squarcialupi visited Naples in 1450 and was much interested in a fine reed organ belonging to one of the Neapolitan Cardinals. The town so impressed him that in a letter to Giovanni de' Medici, whom he addresses as his "Most Beloved Compare" (friend or crony), he says: "If I were to attempt to describe Naples and the King's court, I should have to engage the services of all the professional scribes at the court of Rome for at least three days."

During the course of the sixteenth century, Naples, with its brilliant court and its many important churches, continued to cultivate both ecclesiastical and secular music. But, although the musical traditions of the town go back to such early times, the musical fame of Naples, in our day, rests on the developments which took place there in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and which were chiefly connected with the Opera.

CHAPTER IX

THE RENAISSANCE PAINTERS AND MUSIC

THE Italian painters of the Renaissance period, whose art had already reached such a wonderful maturity, stand on a much higher artistic level than contemporary composers—with such rare exceptions as a Josquin des Près, a Lassus, or a Palestrina. Yet, the nobles who commissioned these great artists to decorate chapel walls with pictures of their patron saints, or to paint the family portraits, seem as a rule to have shown their musicians more favour.

This was perhaps partly owing to the fact that, by their very profession whether as performers or teachers, the musicians were brought into closer personal touch with the princes; and once music had become the fashion, the court came to depend on the singers and instrumentalists for entertainment during their leisure hours. It is curious to note that notwithstanding the comparatively elementary state of music, famous painters and sculptors did not think it in any way derogatory to appear occasionally in the rôle of singers or lutenists. In an age when the arts were still closely united, artists seem to have been impelled by a kind of intellectual curiosity to experiment in every medium.

There are many instances of the interest taken in music by the early painters. Orcagna, who introduced musical instruments into some of his frescoes, was himself a singer and luteplayer. Leonardo da Vinci, so many of whose masterpieces were painted for the Sforza of Milan, is said to have first attracted the notice of Ludovico Il Moro by his playing of the lyre or lute. Verrocchio, painter, sculptor and goldsmith, was also a musician of some skill. It is evident that Gian Cristofero Romano's talents as a musician were as much appreciated by his patrons as his genius in reproducing in marble young Beatrice d'Este's pert features, or in carving decorative medallions for the doorways of Isabella's *Camerini*. Elisabetta of Urbino, in sending her brother the Duke of Mantua, a certain Adriano, recommends him equally as a sculptor and as a lutenist. Giorgione, Pordenone, Titian, and many other great painters were considered good amateur musicians. A love of music was innate in the Italian race; and the Renaissance Intellectuals were instinctively attracted to an art which enhanced the beauty of poetry, and deepened and etherealized emotional expression.

Apart from their love of music, the Renaissance painters did great practical service to the history of the art by faithfully reproducing, in countless paintings, all the musical instruments in use in those days; and by fixing various important details concerning the manner of holding and playing the instruments; as well as the way in which they were combined in the early experiments in chamber music. Such visual records have greater vividness and accuracy than the most detailed verbal accounts.

Hundreds of paintings prove how familiar the artists were with the instruments. With marvellous exactitude, they have reproduced the shapes and the varying dimensions of the families of instruments: showing the details of form and construction, the arrangement and number of the strings and pegs. They were recording well-known incidents when they painted those groups of lutenists and viol players reading their parts from a book, sometimes held for them by a little boy. The very notes of some of these songs can be read, with their canto, tenor, contra-tenor, and bass parts.

Considered from this point of view, the famous picture galleries are museums, in which the history of the development of musical instruments can be studied. Since the oldest pictures deal chiefly with religious subjects, the musicians are depicted there as angels taking part in a celestial concert, or playing at the feet of the Madonna enthroned. But, no matter how the artist's fancy may express his vision of the heavenly realms, the musical instruments he introduces are those in use in his lifetime; and as new types make their appearance on earth, the angelic orchestra is enlarged.

In the oldest paintings, the types are often limited to wind and percussion instruments: horns and trumpets are blown, cymbals clashed. To these, Lorenzo Veneziano's angels add the psalterium, the portable organ, the lute; and the harp, with its lovely outline and celestial associations, is naturally often represented. Donatello's bronze *putti* play the flute, the horn and a tiny rebec—an early bowed instrument. Gradually new varieties of viols and lutes make their appearance in the charming "Glorie"; those hovering groups of angels that surround the principal figures in many early paintings, drawing soundless music from the instruments over which they bend with such serene intentness.

A great many pictures prove the popularity of the lute; and it is evident that the celestial musicians found this instrument just as hard to keep in tune as did the mortals; as witness the preoccupation of the two angel lutenists in Mantegna's well-known picture in the Brera gallery, Milan. When the lute family developed, the painters introduced all the new types: the mandores and the big theorbos, the archlutes and the chitarrone, as well as the kindred guitar.

The development of the bowed instruments can also be followed in the works of the early painters. The rough, solid-looking gigas and rebecs acquire soundholes; curves are cut in their sides to allow free play to the bow; corner blocks appear; the fantastically-carved neck goes through many evolutions, till the fingerboard and peg-box develop and the human or animal head, that was considered a natural finish to the neck, changes into a scroll. The sloping-shouldered viols are often elaborately decorated; gradually their infinite variety of shapes and sizes becomes reduced to a quartet, consisting of treble-viol, viola da braccio, viola da gamba and violone: husky-toned instruments, soon to be replaced by the clearer, more powerful violin family, which, in its turn, appears on the painter's canvas.

As secular music developed, artists began to paint human musicians.

The instrument played by Bartolomeo Veneto's "Woman Lutenist" (Brera) is perfectly reproduced; and one can almost read the notes of her three-part piece. In Pitate's picture of "Moses in the Bullrushes" (Pitti Gallery, Florence), Pharoah's daughter is entertained by a sixteenth-century lady and gentleman, the former playing the lute, the latter a bass-viol—a favourite combination of instruments. Giorgione's famous "Concert" shows a duet between clavicembalo and bass-viol. It is evident that the family of the painter Bassano were musically inclined. For in a painting by him, which hangs in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence, one daughter plays the spinet and another the archlute; whilst the father, mother and a small son sing a part-song from a book.

Many picture galleries illustrate the slow evolution of the various types with which musicians and instrument makers experimented for centuries. Not only in such famous centres as Cremona, Brescia and Pavia; but also in Bologna, Venice, Rome, Padua and most of the big Italian towns, craftsmen fashioned beautiful instruments which they decorated with inlay, paintings or carvings. Their exquisite works of art, which now lie silent in our museums, were then to be found in the home of every music-lover.

CHAPTER X

INFLUENCE OF EARLY POETRY ON MUSIC

"La Musica è la dolcezza e quasi l'anima della Poesia."—(Tasso)[1]

THE early Italian poets played as important a part as the painters in the initial development of art music. Sometimes the poet and the composer were one and the same person. Francesco Landini, for instance, frequently wrote his own verses; and the personal, almost biographical note in the words of many old songs suggests that the practice was common, if not general, as with the troubadours.

Early Italian music was an adjunct of poetry; and the new poetical forms, created in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, left their mark on the music that was fashioned to their likeness. From them, secular music acquired a lighter style, a more rapid pace. When Dante's solemn, slow-moving stanzas were followed by the nimbler verses of Cavalcanti, Petrarch and Sacchetti, the notes which the composers fitted to these words had also to move with more agility. Again, when composers experimented in new metres and rhythms, the musical patterns and accents had perforce to imitate the new verbal technique.

A germ-type, to be met with in the folk-lore of many countries, is the Dance Song, in which singing, in default of instrumental accompaniment, served to mark time for the dancers. The type of poem known as the ballata, carola, canzone a ballo (dance song), or barzelletta, is very common in early Italian literature. Originally the verses were probably sung to any suitable folk-dance tune; later, special melodies were written to them, whose form was moulded on the dance or poem. The regular repetition of the principal dance step after each new figure—which had its counterpart in the poetical formula of stanza and refrain—became, in its musical manifestation, the solo song with chorus, or "ritornello corale." Of this type were the ballads of several verses (Ballate a più stanze), with which the fourteenth-century Florentine writers of Novelle ended their descriptions of each day's entertainment.

The popular ballata form was also the basis of the *Laude Spirituali*—hymns which St. Francis of Assisi taught the people to sing during the religious processions of the thirteenth century. It was likewise in this form that Jacopone da Todi wrote most of his famous *Laude;* consequently, the musical *Laude* consisted of a series of solo sections followed by a choral refrain.

Other types favoured by the fourteenth-century poets were: the Frottola, the Strambotta or Rispetto d'Amore, the Caccia, and the Madrigal. It

[1] "Music gives a charm, as it were, a soul, to Poetry."

was these little art-poems which inspired the songs of the early Italian composers when the taste for secular music began to develop. The oldest collections of Italian music contain numbers of songs, written in a primitive counterpoint for two, three, or four voices, which are set to such poems. In each case, the music has borrowed from the form and metre of the verses certain characteristics of structure or rhythm.

The *frottola*—a poem akin to the *ballata*, that was very popular in northern Italy—imparted to the accompanying music a simple architectural structure, based on the elements of repetition and contrast, which represents the groundwork of future musical forms. The *strambotta*—a type of love poem common all over Italy—created an equally symmetrical song-type, its eight-line stanza being fitted to two musical phrases repeated four times. In this wise, Italian poetry endowed the early Italian songs with a certain four-square form which contrasted strongly with the continuous contrapuntal flow of the Flemish part-songs.

Another significant difference may be noted in the greater melodic interest of Italian music. The importance given by the Italians to melody had a definite influence on the structure of their polyphonic music. While medieval composers in general placed the theme in the middle or tenor part, and wove the secondary melodies around it, the Italians gave the principal theme to the upper voice or soprano. The result was that the more interesting soprano part tended to become a solo, while the less melodic lower parts were treated as an accompaniment. Even when the Italians had acquired all the contrapuntal science of the Netherlands and were steeped in Flemish influence, they continued to give a preponderating rôle to the melodic line; and they were never attracted by the more artificial aspects of counterpoint which led to such abuses in the works of the less-inspired among the Flemish composers.

The *frottola* and *strambotta* faded into insignificance when the *madrigal* began to flourish. As early as the fourteenth century, it is mentioned as a favourite form by Francesco Landini, in an already quoted poem. It soon grew so popular that the word *madrigal* came to be used as a generic term to indicate secular, as distinct from ecclesiastical, music. The pastoral *madrigal* poem, which dealt with shepherds, woods and birds, adopted a characteristic freedom as regards rhythm and length of verse; and from it, the musical *madrigal* acquired a corresponding liberty of rhythm and style.

From the *madrigal* another interesting type of poem was evolved: the "Caccia" or hunt poem (allegorical in meaning, for it was really a love poem). An important new device had its origin in the musical Caccia, in which two voices pursued one another, singing the same theme; this developed into the "canon" form. There was sometimes a third part, which did not, however, imitate the theme, and was possibly played on an instrument.

This type of song was particularly popular in Florence and interesting examples of Caccie are to be found in the *Squarcialupi MS.* Jacopo da Bologna's "Uselletto Selvaggio" ("Little Wild Bird"), is a three-part Caccia,

he third part consisting of sustained, accompanying notes. The same MS ontains a two-part Caccia by Ser Gherardellus de Florentia: "Tosto che 'alba del bel giorno appare" ("Scarce had the fair day dawned"); and two nd three-part Caccie by various early Italian composers are to be found in ther contemporary collections.

These old songs which had been inspired, and to a certain extent shaped, y poetry, were in their turn to provide material for a new kind of music; or presently the words were sometimes entirely omitted, and purely nstrumental music remained. This occurred when the viols, lutes and the lavicembalo had been sufficiently improved to be worth listening to for heir own sakes, instead of being a mere accompanying element.

In the beginning, the instrumentalists, having no music of their own, ad to content themselves with playing part-songs. And even when omposers had begun to recognize the technical possibilities of the instru- ments, and to write music specially for them, so strong was the force of abit that these pieces were at first called *Canzone da Suonare* (Songs to be layed). Slight and unimportant though they may now appear, these early ong-types contained the germ of forms which led to rich developments n the domain of instrumental music during the following centuries.

CHAPTER XI

OLD NOTATIONAL SYSTEMS AND SOME OLD MANUSCRIPTS

WE, who have inherited, ready-made, the complete modern notational system, can hardly imagine the difficulties with which medieval musicians were faced. Starting out with a few vague symbols, they had to invent the whole series of conventional signs that constitutes the written language of music; to discover some means of designating pitch, note duration, rhythm, time and all the other constituent elements of music. And as the art developed, each generation of musicians had new notational problems to solve.

Church music, at the time of St. Gregory, was noted down in Neumes; signs to which various origins have been attributed. According to some authorities they are derived from the Greek accent marks used in Rhetoric to show the rise and fall of the voice. Those most in use were the virga / which indicated a rise, and the punctum ◆ which indicated a fall in pitch. No definite intervals were represented by these signs; they served merely to prompt the memory of the singers who had been taught the chant by ear with the help of the monochord. This one-stringed instrument supplied the limited number of notes required in singing plain chant; the notes being indicated on the finger board by the letters of the alphabet.

The necessity for indicating the intervals more definitely became obvious as music developed, especially when it came to writing down the first part-music, about the tenth century. Mention of part-music is made as early as the ninth century in a treatise by Johannes Scotus Erigenus, an Irishman, who taught in Paris. He describes part-music as beginning in unison—which he calls the "first principle"—then moving in simple or compound harmony (symphonias), and ending in unison.

The oldest form of polyphony, known as *organum*[1] or *diaphonia*, consisted of two parts moving at an interval of a fifth; later, the lower part remained stationary whilst the upper part carried on the melody. Other terms used for this early polyphony were *symphonia* and *discantus* (singing in consonances); the only harmonies allowed were those admitted by the Greeks: the fourth, fifth and octave.

With the development of polyphony, it became essential to designate pitch and the relative positions of the intervals with accuracy; but before a satisfactory system was evolved, all sorts of experiments were tried.

[1] Part-music was possibly instrumental in origin. The earliest polyphony may have been the elementary form used by players of ancient three-stringed instruments who produced a continuous fifth on the two lower strings, to accompany the melody, which was played on the upper string. A drone effect, similar to that of the bagpipes, was the result. The fact that the term *Organum*, then used to designate all musical instruments, reappears as one of the names for the oldest form of polyphony, supports the theory of the instrumental origin of part-music.

One of the first methods consisted in placing dots to represent the notes, at definite distances above the words. This gave, of course, only a vague idea of pitch. Next, musicians tried drawing a single red line across the page, which indicated a definite note or degree of the scale; above or below this line, the other notes were represented by Neumes, letters of the alphabet, or words, placed at a distance that approximately indicated the required interval. Above this red line, which came to represent F (first space treble), the Flemish monk, Hucbald, drew another line, to mark the C a fifth above it, which was coloured yellow or green: and the basic principle of our notational system was fixed.

A century later, (at the beginning of the eleventh century), the Italian Guido of Arezzo, improved Hucbald's system by placing another line between the F and the C, the black line A. When the compass of the music made it necessary, Guido added a fourth line at the top or bottom; and he wrote his music in Neumes on the lines and in the spaces. This stave of four lines is still in use for plain chant.

The letters F and C, which were placed at the beginning of the respective lines to fix their pitch, and the G which was introduced for the same purpose later, grew into our clef signs by gradual modifications of outline. By a similar evolution, the Greek accent marks received a more definite shape and developed into the medieval black notes, rectangular or diamond-shaped, the relative duration values of which were fixed by Franco of Cologne. Thus, by means of international contributions, the foundations of our notational system were laid by Hucbald of Flanders, Guido of Tuscany, and Franco of Cologne.

But the perfecting of this written musical language was the work of centuries. In time, the notes changed their names and shapes; the slowest, the maxima and longa, were discarded, and new short-note values were invented, as passages became more intricate and moved more rapidly. The number of stave lines was increased to five, six, ten or more—to shrink again to five in modern days. At first, there were no bar lines, and time signatures were not needed, since only one kind of time, triple, was regarded as *perfect*.

Polyphony continued to make further demands on notation. Counterpoint—the art of singing simultaneously two or more melodies—led to important developments. And the *Ars Nova*, the new art of mensural music which appeared in the fourteenth century, evolved a complicated system for distinguishing different varieties of rhythmical divisions. This had become necessary now that several notes of counterpoint had to be sung to the sustained notes of a plain chant melody; the elaborate vocalizes of early Italian songs fitted to the notes of two or three simpler accompanying melodies; and various new contrapuntal formulæ noted down for an increasing number of voices.

The art of mensural, or measured music developed at first on different lines in France and Italy. The early Italian composers, Giovanni de Florentia, Francesco Landini, Jacopo da Bologna, etc., whose songs are transcribed

in fourteenth-century MSS, invented a notational system of their own, distinct in many particulars from that adopted by the French and Flemish. One important difference is to be seen in the time signatures, which became necessary once the use of duple as well as triple time was allowed—an innovation for which, as we have seen, the Italians were responsible.

The Italian system of time signatures was more complicated, but more definite than the French. The Italians devised a very intricate nomenclature for the various rhythmic divisions, and utilized as time signatures, the initial letters of the classifying terms. Thus, the letters *s.p.* at the head of the stave, indicated "divisio senario perfecta" or six breve notes to the bar, in ternary or perfect time. Whilst the letters *s.i.* stood for "divisio senario imperfecta" or six breves to the bar, in binary or duple time, which was considered imperfect.

Different kinds of time signatures were invented in other countries. The symbols most commonly used in France and Flanders were a circle for perfect or triple time, and a broken circle C for the "imperfect" duple time (the latter sign developed eventually into our common time signature C); strokes or dots within the circle indicated diminution of the values of the notes used.

Apart from time signatures, the Italian and French notations showed other points of difference. The Italians used black notes, the French red or white; the Italian stave had six lines, the French five; the Italians for long retained the use of *ligaturæ*, a system of compound notes employed in the old notation which constituted a kind of shorthand method of noting brief phrases. When the northern musicians introduced their more highly developed art into Italy, the Italians adopted the Franco-Flemish notational system, and any national initiative in this respect, gradually died out.

A tendency to increase the *tempo* is noticeable as secular music breaks away from the ecclesiastical. Until the fourteenth century, music had moved with the slow stateliness of the church chant, and the semibreve was the shortest note in use. From that time forward, secular music began to take on speed. The problem of writing down quick passages in a notation that lacked symbols for short note values offered considerable difficulty and was dealt with in a curious manner. Theoretical authorities, with their conservative dislike of innovations, objected to the creation of new kinds of notes. They met the difficulty by endowing the semibreve with an elastic quality; allowing it to represent various values as required: anything from two to twelve semibreves might equal a breve. The notes in such groups of semibreves were not equal in value. For instance, in a six-semibreve time division—where there might be as many as twelve semibreves to the bar—the first notes were hurried, the last taken more slowly; consequently the final semibreves were given something nearer to their proper value. Marchettus of Padua declared this confusing practice to be logical and permissible "because the end is always more perfect than the beginning." But such expedients were so obviously unsatisfactory that soon new subdivisions of short-note values were introduced.

The notes underwent many evolutions of shape and colour. Changes of rhythm and tempo were sometimes shown by the use of different coloured notes; but the significance attributed to the colours became altered in course of time. Eventually, the introduction of red notes came to indicate a change from triple to duple time; consequently the red notes represented values of shorter duration than the black notes.[1] The eventual disappearance of the red notes is explained by the fact that the scribe, if he did not happen to have any red ink at hand, was apt to leave the note temporarily "open" and uncoloured; and as the filling in with red ink was often altogether omitted, the red note became in time white. The result was that, at this period, the long, slow notes were black, and the short notes white.

By a subsequent evolution, based on the convenience of the scribes, the colours were interchanged: the long notes became white, the short notes black—as they are to-day. The notes also gradually lost the sharp, angular outlines they show in the early MSS because the scribes found the rounded notes easier to write quickly. Dots were used in a variety of ways, sometimes as a bar division. But our modern bar line is derived from one of the medieval rest signs, which consisted of lines of various lengths that cut vertically across the stave.

Instrumental notations, or tablatures, were meanwhile developing on different lines; and the lute tablature eventually contributed elements to the completion of the mensural notational system. But, throughout the greater part of the Middle Ages, musicians thought in terms of vocal music; it was not until the Renaissance period that the instruments had become sufficiently developed to be worth considering as separate entities.

Two distinct currents are noticeable during these centuries of musical evolution. On the one hand, composers strove by means of practical experiments to discover the laws inherent in music and to exploit all available technical possibilities. On the other hand, the theorists—to whom music was above all a science which must inevitably develop according to mathematical formulæ—refused to sanction innovations that were not the the logical outcome of traditional laws.

But the musical movements of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had too much vitality to be held back by conservative scientific theories. Practical music—for better or for worse—gradually broke away from the control of the theorists and pressed forward on the new roads that showed such tempting vistas.

Some Old Musical Manuscripts

The manuscripts in which the works of the early Italian composers were transcribed show that, like the craftsmen who designed the old instruments, the medieval scribes were inspired by an instinctive artistic

[1] As was the case with many medieval notational devices, there was room for confusion here; for the use of red might also mean that a passage was to be sung "all'ottavo" that is, an octave higher.

sense and a desire to present any object connected with the art in a decorative and beautiful form.

Apart from the hundreds of exquisitely illuminated books of ecclesiastical music that abound in the cathedrals, museums and libraries of Italy, few ancient MSS are so richly ornamented as the fourteenth-century Squarcialupi *Canzoniere*. The other rare musical collections of that period which contain works by old Italian composers are less lavishly illuminated. Yet, in the mere transcription of the music, the scribes achieved highly artistic effects with their beautifully formed notes, decorative lettering and occasional ornamental touches.

Sometimes the artist has painted little scenes that convey interesting information about contemporary musical developments. A famous late-thirteenth century MS that belonged to Piero de' Medici and is now in the Laurentian Library in Florence (*MS Pluteus XXIX*), opens with a page of miniatures illustrating the three classes into which music was divided at that time: *Musica Mundana*, *Musica Humana* and *Musica Instrumentalis*, *Musica Mundana*, the Music of the Universe, is represented by the planets and the waves of the ocean; *Musica Humana*, by a choir consisting of five men; and *Musica Instrumentalis*, by a man playing a bowed instrument of the giga type; whilst, hanging on the wall or lying on the ground about him are two harps, a rebec and a citole.

Another interesting MS is the *Book of Sonatas* by various composers (Bib. Cent. Florence XIX. 59), containing songs in French, Latin and Italian by Isaac, Tintoris, Alexander Agricola, Obrecht and others. Here, too, the opening pages are richly illuminated. On one page is a portrait of Don Giovan Martin; the first songs are transcribed on a golden stave against a blue or red background and framed in an illuminated border.

Even the MSS that contain the mathematical treatises of the theoretical writers are illustrated with miniatures. Thus, in the *Tractis Varii de Musica* (Ashb. 1051. Bib. Laur. Med.), Guido di Arezzo's portrait adorns the treatise, profusely illustrated with geometrical designs, in which he sets out in rhyme the laws that governed music in the early eleventh century.

There is some curious decoration in a small book of three- and four-part *canzone* and madrigals belonging to the Estense Library Modena (MS dF. 9.9.). Here again, the first songs are written in gold on pages of coloured parchment. The remainder of the little volume is treated in a highly original manner. The scribe, who had a gift for delicate, detailed painting, inserted here and there any little illustration that occurred to him; and the songs are interspersed with tiny, beautifully-finished pictures of flowers and birds which sometimes, but not always, illustrate the words. An entire stave in the middle of a song is given up to a charmingly painted spray of jasmine. Here and there, larkspur, wallflowers, peacocks, parrots, rendered with a Flemish sense of detail, diversify the pages. And at the end of one song, the scribe has depicted his own hand lifting the quill pen in a final gesture. The little MS seems to typify those days of spacious leisure when painting, poetry and music went hand in hand.

PART II

MATURITY

CHAPTER I

VENICE

VENICE, since its foundation in the early Middle Ages, the most distinctive of Italian towns—in situation, form of government and social customs—was equally original in the art it produced from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century.

The city that was for so many hundreds of years the scene of an intense and brilliant life, now survives chiefly as a memorial of the past. Venice jealously preserves and treasures the artistic creations of her remarkable medieval and Renaissance civilization. Churches, palaces, paintings, carvings and lavish ornamental decoration speak eloquently of the vital genius of a people whose art grew to perfection in the most propitious circumstances, until excessive prosperity and luxury weakened artistic inspiration and led to the inevitable decadence.

Facing the east, drawn towards the east by her craving for wealth and territorial conquest, Venice gradually assimilated some characteristics of the Orient. Her adventurous merchants, who brought back from their voyages the rare products of eastern lands, became insensibly influenced in their mode of life by this foreign intercourse; and Venice acquired an exotic atmosphere which Nature herself helped to intensify.

The island city—now wrapped in the diaphanous mists of the lagoons, now glowing with sunset colours that blaze alike from sky and sea—is impregnated by that sensuous atmosphere which emanates from the canvases of Carpaccio and the Bellini; of Veronese, Tintoretto and Tiepolo. Music too, found means of expressing this strange beauty. But, while the artistic visions of the Venetian painters remain to enchant us, the music of the contemporary composers is forgotten. The majestic *cantatæ* and *symphoniæ* whose sounds filled the Basilica of San Marco or the public Piazze of Venice, and the gay madrigals that echoed across the lagoons, belong almost as much to the dead past as does the political prestige of the Venetian Republic.

Nevertheless, the music that developed in fifteenth and sixteenth century Venice and which reached its climax in the works of Claudio Merulo and the two Gabrieli, was an important contribution to art. And these composers, though forced to express themselves in the limited medium of a less mature art, displayed in their music the characteristic sense of breadth and the love of vivid colour that distinguished the works of the great Venetian painters.

Early Venetian music was chiefly connected with the Basilica of San Marco, which was the very heart of ancient Venice. Nowhere is the oriental note more clearly seen: in its domes and arches, in the rich tones of its mosaics and frescoes, the Byzantine influence is supreme. When the ninth century

inhabitants of those Adriatic islands began to build their basilica with the help of Byzantine craftsmen, they created a symbol of the Venetian State, in which eastern and western culture were to mingle.

Within the walls of San Marco, Venetian music uttered its first halting strains. For, when Venice grew powerful, the church of the patron Saint of the Republic became the scene of magnificent political and civic ceremonies which played an ever-increasing part in the lives of the citizens. To San Marco came the Doge in state attended by the Council and Senate to assist at the principal religious festivals; here, too, were celebrated with great pomp the coronation of each new Doge and the principal victories of the Republic.

The wealthy state, which took such pride in adding to the decorative beauty of the Basilica as to decree that every merchant should bring back from the East some treasure for its adornment, did not fail to take a practical interest in the early musical developments at San Marco. Although there, as elsewhere, music was at first chiefly vocal, it was for its instrumental music—particularly for its organ music—that Venice was to become famous.

Thanks to the fact that the government of the Republic, proud of its well-organized activities, soon began to keep records of the various departments it administered, we possess early information regarding the music in the Basilica. Shortly after the formation of the famous Council of Ten, a register of the musical appointments at San Marco was opened and kept regularly from that time on. The first entry, which bears the date 1318, records the nomination of "Mistro Zuchetti" as organist; and we may infer that he was not by any means the first to hold the post, for the organ had already been in use in Italian churches for several centuries past.

These early records mention only the names of the successive organists and give no details concerning their duties. But we know from other sources, that, like all medieval organists, those of Venice were organ-builders as well. (Mistro Zuchetti had been engaged to repair the organ of San Marco's two years before his appointment.) The organists were usually singers, too, and able to lead the choir; and, in addition to the regular liturgical music, they played improvisations of their own. Such extemporary preludes, etc., must, no doubt, have consisted in rudimentary part-music, akin to that of the old Tuscan composers: experimental gropings towards the contrapuntal and harmonic formulæ that were later to develop in such variety and beauty.

The second name on the list of the San Marco organists is that of Francesco da Pesaro. It was during his tenure of office that the famous artistic contest, in honour of the King of Cyprus, was held in 1364 at which the blind Florentine poet-organist, Francesco Landini, was crowned victor by the Doge. In the course of the fourteenth century, the entries in the register mention merely the names of the five other organists who succeeded one another; but more important developments were soon to be recorded.

The dawn of the fifteenth century, which brought the State of Venice to the zenith of its glory, saw the foundation of a choir-school at San Marco. Early in the reign of the Doge Michele Steno, the Senate decreed that eight

Venetian boy-deacons, *putti venete diaconi*, be admitted to the choir and taught o sing well. Their training was at first entrusted to the adult choristers; ut, before the end of the century, one of their number, the Flemish Cantor, le Fossis, was appointed the first choir-master at San Marco. Thus, the choir-chool system, already highly developed in the Netherlands, was introduced o Venice, and Flemish music was soon to become an important factor there. t was shortly after the nomination of de Fossis that his fellow-countryman, Cordier, came to Venice in the suite of Beatrice d'Este and astonished the Venetians by the beauty of his singing in the Basilica.

Though the superiority of the Flemish musicians in choral music was ecognized, the organ continued to be served by Italians, and almost xclusively by Venetians. The organist was already an important personage, ractically independent of the choir-master. The special interest taken in his instrument is apparent from the fact that the Basilica, at an early date, ossessed two organs, and that the nomination of a second organist is ecorded even before the creation of the post of choir-director.

Hand in hand with the developments in organ-playing, went improve-nents in organ-building, an industry for which Venice had been noted ince the early ninth century, when a Venetian monk made a hydraulic rgan with leaden pipes for the French King, Louis le Débonnaire. The city ad kept up its reputation for skill in this craft throughout the Middle Ages. The organ of the church of San Salvatore, Venice, is said to have had a hromatic keyboard as early as the thirteenth century; and during the follow-ng centuries the Venetian organ-builders, Jacobello, Antonio de' Servi nd Tomaso Ingegneri, continued to perfect the small light organ which the talians preferred to the heavier northern type of instrument. One of the nost famous of the early Venetian organists was Bernardo Murer, (formerly alled the German but, in the light of recent researches, claimed by Italy) vho introduced many improvements, particularly in the pedals.

The increasing technical possibilities of the organ, especially when the nechanism of the stops had been improved, suggested a new field to omposers for whom vocal music alone had hitherto been of importance. Venice, with her two-century-old tradition of organ technique and xtemporary playing, worked gradually towards the innovations in instru-nental composition that made her one of the leaders of European music luring the fifteenth century.

With the Venetians, planning on a big scale was instinctive; and, in order o adapt itself to the splendour of the State ceremonies, music, hitherto estricted to small forms, was forced to increase its dimensions, to intensify ts tonal volume. The very structure of San Marco, with its many domes and ts tribunes that span the lofty naves and aisles in mid-air, may have uggested the elaborate performances of sacred music which the Venetians ow began to organize. Besides its two organs, the Basilica had, from an arly date, used two choirs, which probably evolved naturally from the alter-ate chanting of the liturgy by the clergy and the congregation. The two hoirs, with their accompanying organs, took up appropriate positions

facing one another in the lofty cantoriæ or tribunes, from which the music floated down with beautiful effect.

This double choir was the nucleus of important developments. Its use was revived and expanded in the early sixteenth century by the famous Flemish master, Adrian Willaert, and became a characteristic element in the works of the Venetian composers who succeeded him. The choral and instrumental groups were gradually multiplied, until as many as four choirs and four organs, supported by other instruments, provided the material for a polyphonic vocal and instrumental music which no other town had yet attempted on such a grandiose scale.

By the close of the fifteenth century, Venice, as yet comparatively little influenced by the Flemish school, was of sufficient musical importance to be chosen for the site of the first music-printing works ever established. In 1498, Ottavio Petrucci, subject of Federico da Montefeltro, received from the "Invincible Lords of Venice," the privilege of printing music in their city; and Petrucci and his successors, Scotto, and Gardano, have handed down to us in their beautiful editions the music of the chief composers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The sixteenth century opened most propitiously for Venice. Her power was now firmly established, her commerce world-wide,[1] her wealth fabulous. Added to this, her wonderful schools of painting, the influx to the city of printers of both books and music, and her growing interest in literature and the arts, made Venice one of the chief intellectual centres in Europe. Then suddenly, in the first decade of the new century, two fatal years saw the prosperous city reduced to silence and desolation; for the League of Cambrai, by uniting against Venice such a formidable coalition as France, Germany and the Papal States, completely paralysed the life of the city. When the Republic, with characteristic astuteness, managed to turn the tables on her principal enemies, the relief from the threatened ruin brought an immediate reaction. The Venetians, more than ever determined to enjoy life to the full, now entered upon that period of extravagance and luxury which, though it at first gave an impetus to the arts by providing greater scope for their exercise, eventually crippled the resources of Venice, and led to material and artistic decay. In these processes, Venetian music was naturally involved; its fate was closely linked up with the glory and the fall of the Republic.

Social conditions had altered fundamentally since early days when the hardworking, frugal citizens of Venice had all enjoyed equal rights. The wealth that resulted from the successful Levantine trade and the power such wealth brought with it had gradually become concentrated in the hands of a few rich patricians and merchants. No longer content with the simple existence and the plain wooden houses of their forefathers, they began, in the fourteenth century, to build magnificent palaces along the Grand Canal,

[1] A new factor, the future significance of which was not yet realized, already threatened the prosperity of Venice: the discovery of America, which opened up rival trade routes.

Lorenzo Veneziano's "Sposalizio di Santa Caterina" with Angels playing various instruments.
(Photo: Alinari, Florence.)

Perugino's "Assumption" showing four Angel-Musicians.
(*Photo: Alinari, Florence.*)

which was to become, in the words of Philippe de Commynes, "the most beautiful street in the world." Amazed by the sumptuous splendour of fifteenth-century Venice, the French chronicler found a fitting epithet when he exclaimed: "This is the most triumphant city I have ever seen!" This characteristic note of triumph was soon to find its way into Venetian art and music.

In the splendid palaces of the patricians, lavish entertainments were held for which vocalists and instrumentalists flocked to Venice from all parts of Italy. Contemporary accounts of these festivities name among those early virtuosi, the lute players: Marco del Aquila, the two Bellamano, and the Blind Man of Adria. The Venetians also listened with delight to the *canzone* and *strambotti* of Marchetto Cara and Bartolomeo Tromboncino, who found such favour at the court of Isabella d'Este.

The chief Mæcenas was, however, the Venetian State itself, which provided entertainments for its pleasure-loving citizens. The people, shorn of their civic privileges, were kept in good humour by magnificent festivals which gave them the illusion of sharing in the splendour of the wealthy State. This wily policy unwittingly served the purposes of art; and the government, which saw in music a valuable adjunct to its brilliant ceremonies, became by its patronage and encouragement of musicians, directly instrumental in the flowering of Venetian music which took place in the sixteenth century.

Although on her own initiative Venice had achieved a notable musical development, she too, like other Italian centres, came during the sixteenth century under the influence of the Flemish contrapuntal school. Its chief representative in Venice was Adrian Willaert—a pupil of the great Josquin des Près—who had been for some time in the service of the d'Este family at Ferrara.

When Willaert came to San Marco as choir-director in 1527, he found there conditions as favourable as ever fell to the lot of a musician. The Basilica already possessed an established tradition in church music; and the choir Willaert took over had been trained according to Flemish ideas by his countryman, de Fossis. In addition, there were few churches where organ-playing had reached so high a standard; the difficult tests prescribed for the candidates who competed for the post of organist at San Marco are in themselves a proof that serious musicianship was expected of them.

Willaert soon won the high esteem of the authorities. For even if "l'Eccellentissimo Adriano" was not—as has often been stated—the mainspring of all musical life in Venice, he played an important rôle there. Willaert re-organized the choir and the musical services in the Basilica, where he also founded a school of counterpoint. As a teacher, he spread a profound knowledge of Flemish polyphony; a science the young musicians of Venice were to utilize in their own individual manner. Venice, in its turn, influenced the art of the northern composer; during his thirty-five years residence there, Willaert's style underwent a mellowing process which is particularly noticeable in his *madrigals*, his most successful

compositions. Willaert's exceptional position at San Marco helped to spread his fame all over Italy. Musicians came from all parts to study at the Venetian school; and patrons of music, like Duke Alfonso d'Este, used to visit the Flemish composer to discuss with him the new tendencies of the art whose horizon was rapidly widening.

During Willaert's long directorship, a novel development in organ-playing was inaugurated at San Marco by Annibale of Padua, a brilliant executant, and the first composer of note amongst the Basilica organists. His performances, which were very much admired at that time, consisted in a kind of duet between him and the first organist, Parabosco. The latter would give out a theme on his instrument to which Annibale, seated at the second organ in the opposite gallery, would improvise a reply, embroidering the theme in the fashion of that day. Experiments of this kind led to the formation of a style distinct from the vocal, and resulted in the composition of works suited to the technique of the organ. The first noteworthy examples are the *Ricercare* and *Toccatas* of Annibale Padovano and of Claudio Merulo da Correggio, who succeeded Parabosco at the first organ in San Marco. These compositions, though primitive compared to the organ music of a later day, show a marked advance in the feeling for instrumental style.

This early organ music was a genuine Venetian creation. The forms invented by the sixteenth-century organists of the Basilica were a development of the types of music they played during the services, and which are summarized in the tests set for candidates who competed for the post of organist at San Marco. These tests consisted chiefly in: the reproduction of a choral chant sung by the choir; the improvisation of three parts in fugal style, to a Gregorian melody in *canto fermo*; the addition of coloratura ornamentation to a Gregorian theme; and the extemporization of preludes, consisting of choral and running passages. Such material, when perfected and crystallized, provided the mould for the new musical forms: the *fantasia*, *ricercare*, and *toccata*; and consequently, the Basilica of San Marco was, in a literal sense, the foster mother of the first purely instrumental forms.

For long, all serious musical life continued to revolve around the famous church where most of the best musicians of Venice were employed. Willaert's immediate successors were two pupils of his: the Fleming, de Rore—one of the first composers to introduce the chromatic intervals which enriched music with new colour and modulatory elements—and Zarlino, the famous theoretician, a fervent panegyrist of his master, Willaert. Zarlino's great work, the "Institutioni Harmoniche" (1558), had a far-reaching influence. By his adoption of the interval of the third as the determining harmonic factor, Zarlino founded the major-minor system—the system which forms the basis of modern harmony, and which was soon to supersede the Modal system.

Most of the celebrated Venetian musicians graduated from the choir-school of San Marco. The training was of a high standard, for, in addition to vocal skill, a thorough knowledge of counterpoint was essential to all choristers in those days of "contrappunto alla mente," when they were

xpected to be able to extemporize polyphonic parts to a Gregorian theme. s comparatively little music was then written out completely, such nprovisations were the general rule both in vocal and instrumental per- ormances. The virtuoso possessing great technical skill and limited musical nowledge was later to invade the profession; but, in the sixteenth and arly seventeenth centuries, proficiency in both the science and practice of is art was required of the singer. According to a forcible, if inelegant, ictum of that day: "qui canit quod non sapit appelatur bestia" (he who ings what he doesn't understand is a fool).

The Basilica Choir School was the Alma Mater of the two greatest omposers of the Venetian school, Andrea Gabrieli and his nephew, Giovanni. These two men, who belonged to an old patrician family of Venice, brought the sacred music of their native city to a high stage of evelopment. Both were for many years organists and composers to the ignoria, and as such were often commissioned to write works for State estivals.

The spectacular nature of the Venetian ceremonies favoured the intro- uction of a brilliant note into the music specially composed for such ccasions. This quality was provided by a new element—the use of wind nstruments and occasional strings which, in combination with the voice and rgan, resulted in a richer polyphony and a more vivid tone colour. The ntroduction of wind instruments into sixteenth century church music is said o have been suggested by their use in the Hebrew Temple. But the custom as an old one in Venice and a local origin may perhaps be deduced from he scene depicted in a well-known painting by Giovanni Bellini. His "Procession in Piazza San Marco" shows the Doge going in state from the djacent Ducal palace to the Basilica. In the foreground is the choir— receded by three musicians playing the viol, lute and lyre. Some distance ehind, with their cornetti and trombones, come the players of wind nstruments who always accompanied the Doge when he appeared in ublic. It might easily happen that the wind instruments, whose triumphant ounds had filled the Piazza San Marco, should eventually make their way nto the church, and join forces with the organs, whose strains poured out o greet the procession. Whatever the origin of the use of wind instruments n Venetian church music, the Gabrieli constantly employed the cornetto nd trombone in their *cantatas* and *sacræ cantiones*; while a tendency to experi- nent in new timbres is to be seen in Giovanni's use of the little viol, out of which the violin was then being evolved.

Venetian composers had frequent opportunities for the production of mportant compositions during the second half of the sixteenth century, when the State celebrated with much pomp the visits of foreign princes, he victories of their fleet, and various local festivals. It was for such occasions hat Andrea Gabrieli wrote his *sacræ cantiones*, works for voices and instru- nents, planned on a hitherto unattempted scale; the twelve to sixteen-part olyphony being executed by a double choir supported by wind instruments. ometimes, the functions were held in the Basilica, sometimes on the Piazza

near the Rialto where an altar was erected for the religious ceremonies. This enabled a large number of citizens, in tribunes, barges and boats, to assist at the magnificent rites, whose effectiveness was enhanced by the unique setting of the Grand Canal with its richly carved and frescoed palaces.

The Rialto was the scene of the festivities given to celebrate the victory of Christendom over the Turks at Lepanto, in 1571, for which occasion Andrea Gabrieli wrote a *Cantata* entitled: *The Triumph Christ*. Three years later, the city witnessed still more grandiose ceremonies in honour of the visit of Catherine de' Medici's son, Henry the Third, who, after his short reign in Poland, passed through Venice on his way home to succeed his brother, Charles the Ninth, on the throne of France. The names of many famous Venetian artists and musicians are connected with this historic event.[1]

The musical side of the elaborate festival was entrusted to the three principal official musicians employed by the Signoria at San Marco. Andrea Gabrieli, then second organist, contributed a twelve-part *cantata* for two choirs: *Ecco Vinegia Bella*. ("Behold beautiful Venice."). Zarlino, the choir-master, directed the singers and instrumentalists who accompanied the Doge on his State ship, the *Bucentaur*, when he went out to meet his royal visitor, followed by a fleet of richly-decorated gondolas in which were seated the nobles and senators, attired in their ceremonial robes. Music filled the air as the *Bucentaur*, with its four hundred rowers, glided back across the lagoon and entered Venice through a triumphal arch which had been designed by Palladio and decorated by Tintoretto and Veronese. The drama performed at the close of the State banquet—a tragedy by Frangipane—was interspersed with vocal and instrumental music composed by the first organist of the Basilica, Claudio Merulo; one of the interludes being a *Coro*, in which "all the instruments that had ever been heard of" took part. Late in the evening, songs by Andrea Gabrieli were sung by the serenaders who entertained the King with night-music on the Grand Canal. Venice dazzled its guests as much by the novelty and charm of its music as by its unique romantic beauty.

It followed inevitably, that music written to harmonize with such splendid ceremonies tended to expand far beyond the simple short forms hitherto in use. Polyphonic parts were multiplied, and such instruments as helped to swell the volume of sound and give greater richness of tone were pressed into service. The taste for instrumental music became increasingly characteristic of Venice.

Although so far organ music alone showed the beginnings of a distinct style, the tendency to compose directly for the instruments, instead of adapting vocal music to their use, is evident amongst sixteenth-century Venetian composers. A *Sonata* for five instruments was published in 1586, by Andrea Gabrieli. It is significant that he did not entitle the work: *Canzone da Suonare*, or *Canzone a più istrumenti*, according to the

[1] Tiepolo made this festival the subject of a fresco.

usual custom; and it is noteworthy that the term *Sonata*, soon to become so important, is here used for the first time.

These brilliant musical developments soon brought Venetian composers a European reputation. Already Annibale Padovano—one of the first noted representatives of Italian music to settle abroad—had carried Venetian music to the court of Austria. Andrea Gabrieli remained faithful to Venice, except for a short sojourn at the Bavarian Court in the company of his friend, Orlando di Lasso—the last of the celebrated Flemish masters who, after spending many years in Italy, had entered the service of the Duke of Bavaria. Andrea's compositions were printed in Germany and Belgium and aroused such admiration that, on his return to Venice, many pupils from those countries came to study with him. Amongst them were men like Hans Leo Hassler and Georg Grüber, who were to become famous composers and give an impetus to musical development in Germany.

This was the beginning of the remarkable influx of foreign musicians to Italy which was to continue for two centuries, until all Europe had absorbed Italy's tastes and methods to such a degree, that art music was entirely modelled on the Italian style. Even Germany, in spite of its strong musical inspiration, was so deeply influenced, that most German music of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was essentially Italian in character.

But although many talented foreigners came to study with Andrea Gabrieli, his most brilliant pupil was his own nephew. Giovanni—like his uncle, first chorister and then organist at San Marco—was a composer of genius; he developed and matured his master's ideas and brought Venetian music to a still higher level. Although Giovanni Gabrieli never left Venice (except for an absence of a few months, in 1577, when his uncle sent him to Munich with Orlando di Lasso to escape the plague which was then ravaging Venice), his compositions were widely known; and, after his uncle's death, his growing renown attracted many pupils from abroad, especially from Germany. Such well-known musicians as Heinrich Schütz, Alois Grani and (possibly) Michael Prætorius, learnt their art from Giovanni Gabrieli at Venice, which had become one of the greatest music centres of Europe.

In craftsmanship, skilful use of the instruments, and sense of style, Giovanni surpassed Andrea. A significant tendency is to be seen in his realistic treatment of the text; Italy's dramatic genius was awakening and moving rapidly towards the creation of its most characteristic musical form, the opera. As yet, however, there was no distinct division between secular and religious forms; in the sixteenth century, all great music was still ecclesiastical; and despite their dramatic character, the sacred compositions of Giovanni Gabrieli are imbued with religious feeling.

Like his uncle, Andrea, Giovanni had many opportunities for executing under the most favourable conditions the works he composed to the order of the State. He was commissioned by the Doge, Marino Grimani, to write music for the coronation of his wife, the Dogaressa Morosini. This event, which took place in 1597, was planned with regal pomp; and during the festivities, the Venetians heard the first of those sixteen *Symphoniæ Sacræ*,

which are Giovanni's most celebrated works. They were designed on an impressive scale; now three, now four separate choirs, each supported by a group of wind instruments, executed this elaborate polyphonic music, into which Giovanni introduced new and daring modulations and colour effects that are at times almost modern in character. The purely instrumental *cazone* and *sonatas* which occur in the *symphoniæ*,[1] are noteworthy examples of a novel, independent use of the instruments.

In the following year, Giovanni produced a big choral work for the ceremony of the Doge's "Marriage to the Sea"; a festival which had been held annually on Ascension Day for close on six hundred years, and which gave opportunity for gorgeous pageantry. Such public functions provided Giovanni Gabrieli with direct impulse and inspiration; and his masterpieces, written to satisfy the artistic sense of the ceremonial-loving Venetians, are the musical expression of the spirit of sixteenth-century Venice, conscious of her power and splendour.

Chief amongst the many foreign merchants whom the commercial prestige of the Republic had attracted to Venice, were those celebrated bankers, the Fugger of Nuremberg, who established themselves in the district still known as the "Fondamento dei Tedeschi" (the German Settlement). Great music-lovers, the Fugger family immediately interested themselves in the musical activities of Venice. Gian Giacomo Fugger was appointed "Intendant" (Superintendent) of the San Marco Choir soon after Andrea Gabrieli's nomination as organist; and he and his nephew became close friends of this family whose house was a meeting place for artists. The Fugger made the music of the two Gabrieli known all over Germany; and their works continued to be printed there long after Venetian interest in them had declined, as a result of the sudden, overwhelming popularity of the opera, which was just then coming to life in Florence.

No signs of any waning in the prestige of the Gabrieli were, however, noticeable, in the beginning of the seventeenth century, when Heinrich Schütz—one of the most significant composers of the young German School—was sent by his patron, Landgraf Moritz von Hesse-Cassel, to study with Giovanni Gabrieli. During the three years he spent in Venice, Schütz became steeped in the musical atmosphere of Italy. He adopted, not only the style, but also many of the forms favoured by the master whom he fervently admired. Schütz's first work, a book of Italian Madrigals, was published in Venice during his stay there; and among his later compositions

[1] According to its ancient significance, the word *Symphonia* denoted a composite mass of musical sounds. Though still far behind the architectural structure of the *Symphony*, Giovanni Gabrieli's works, in the magnitude of their scale and his independent treatment of the instruments, foreshadow this type of composition. He was, in many respects, a pioneer of form and his works contain the germs of future types. Those composed for voice and instruments hint at the Opera; whilst his purely instrumental works prepare the way for the Sonata and Symphony.

In an eight-part Sonata, published in 1597, he assigns one part to the *violin*, here mentioned for the first time in a score, though the viola da braccio was the instrument actually used in the performance.

were a series of *Symphoniæ Sacræ*, in the Preface to which, the German composer acknowledges his debt to Giovanni Gabrieli. Schütz was astonished to see to what an extent music permeated all social life in Venice; some form, either vocal or instrumental, being considered indispensable on all festive occasions. In particular, music was at this time becoming very closely linked to the drama. Plays, founded on pastoral, mythological, or allegorical subjects were frequently acted at the Palace of the Doge Marino Grimani, and were invariably accompanied by appropriate musical interludes.

Musically speaking, however, the most important secular type was still that development of the *frottole*, the *madrigal*. All the great church composers: Willaert, de Rore, Verdelot, Merulo, Annibale Padovano, and the Gabrieli, had sought relaxation in this lighter secular form. In consequence, the contrapuntal structure of the *madrigal* became gradually perfected; and the increasing tendency to make the music interpret the sense of the poem endowed this song-form with an expressive, emotional quality. *Madrigals* were among the favourite songs with which Venetian society was entertained in the musical "studios" that became fashionable towards the end of the sixteenth century. The houses of several artists and nobles became noted for such musical gatherings, at which the painters, Sebastiano del Piombo and Giorgione were in great request as lutenists and singers. Zarlino directed the concerts held frequently at the house of Tintoretto, whose daughter Marietta was a singer; while Parabosco was the guiding spirit of the short-lived artistic and scientific society known as the "Accademia della Fama," which met at the palace of the patrician poet, Domenico Venier. On these occasions, the organist of San Marco showed that he was also a skilled performer on the cembalo, an instrument then coming into fashion.

Nor was music confined within the walls of houses and palaces. So beautiful were the effects obtained out on the waters of the Venetian canals and lagoons, that water-music became a feature of the city by day and by night. One of the most interesting forms originated with the Venetian Gondoliers, who created songs of their own by fitting the poems of Ariosto and Tasso to old Venetian melodies. As they drove the gondolas forward, the boatmen at prow and stern sang alternate verses, and distant voices took up the song. The custom still lingered on two centuries later. When Goethe visited Venice, he engaged some gondolier-singers to take him out on the Lagoon, and described in enthusiastic terms the marvellous effect of their "half-choral, half-recitative" music, in that beautiful environment.

Another proof of the widespread popularity of music is to be seen in the fact that the art was zealously cultivated in the monasteries and convents of Venice and the neighbouring towns that came under her influence. It was in the mid-sixteenth century, that young ladies began to take up music as an "accomplishment." Perhaps the oldest existing letter on the subject from a parent to a schoolgirl is that of Pietro Bembo—the famous writer and *habitué* of the Court of Urbino—to his daughter Elena. She had written from her convent school in Padua to ask his permission to learn the

manicordio (a simple early type of clavichord): but Bembo's reply was scarcely encouraging. He warned his daughter that in order to play really well, she would have to devote herself for ten or twelve years exclusively to the manicordio; he bade her consider that if she did not succeed in mastering the instrument, she would reap little pleasure and much humiliation from her performance; and he ended by advising her to keep to "literature and needlework."

Throughout the sixteenth century, music-printing had been actively carried on in Venice. Some of the beautiful old editions of Petrucci, Scotto and Gardano are preserved in the San Marco Library. These collections, picturesquely entitled *Giardinette* or *Gloriæ Musicale*, consist chiefly of *Canzone* and *Madrigals* by the contemporary Italian composers: Marenzio, Luzzaschi, Asola, Ruffo, etc. One of the best-represented of the local musicians is Giovanni Croce of Chiozza, Zarlino's successor as choir-master at San Marco.

A Mass by this composer is among the few original manuscripts to be found to-day in the Music Library of the Basilica of San Marco, which must have once possessed a magnificent collection of the original scores of the great Flemish and Italian composers who worked there as organists and choir-masters.

The loss of all these manuscripts has never been satisfactorily explained. Some were probably destroyed in the late sixteenth century, when terrible fires ravaged the Ducal Palace where the State Library was then housed; lootings and burnings by successive foreign armies no doubt account for further disappearances; and, in addition, it is suspected that many original scores were sold by unscrupulous librarians in days when supervision was lax. To such vicissitudes can no doubt be ascribed the fact that these valuable manuscripts have long since disappeared from San Marco. In a note, inserted in the Music Catalogue of the Basilica, Maestro Monsignore Tosi, who has been for many years choir-director of San Marco, bewails the loss of those priceless memorials of the Golden Age of Venetian polyphony, when Willaert, Andrea and Giovanni Gabrieli, Claudio Merulo, Annibale Padovano and Zarlino, made Venetian music famous throughout Europe.

CHAPTER II

ROME

WHILE the choral and instrumental music of Andrea and Giovanni Gabrieli was making Venice famous, a still more important development, in the domain of strictly ecclesiastical music, had taken place in Rome in the mid-sixteenth century when, with the sublime Masses and *motets* of Palestrina, Italian church music soared to the loftiest artistic heights.

The genius of Palestrina, like that of Giovanni Gabrieli, was moulded by the environment in which it matured. Palestrina's compositions, written specially for the Papal choir at a period of musical reform, faithfully interpret the liturgical text and express a deep spirituality. In this respect, the best work of the sixteenth-century Roman school differs from the contemporary Venetian music which sounds a more worldly note, traceable to the influence of the half-ecclesiastical, half-secular milieu in which it developed.

Rome, which for two centuries, had been outrivalled by northern cities, achieved a new artistic supremacy when it gave to the world the first composer of enduring fame, Palestrina. He closes the medieval period, and brings us to the threshold of the new musical era, ushered in by the year 1600. Although Palestrina's works expressed the artistic ideals of the Middle Ages, and contributed no novel elements to the science of music; yet his native Italian instinct for melody and clarity infused into the classical contrapuntal forms such a rich, new beauty that his art represents the last glorious climax of modal polyphony.

Palestrina's great art is not an isolated phenomenon; it is linked with the evolution of Roman church music during a period of a thousand years. For the germ of his music existed in the song of the early Christian church; and a tradition, remarkable for its continuity, led step by step from plain chant, through primitive choral polyphony and the masterpieces of four generations of Flemish contrapuntists, to the noble creations of this composer who is still regarded as the ideal interpreter of Catholic Liturgy.

The Liturgical chant naturally originated in Rome, the headquarters of Christianity; there too were formulated the laws regarding its mode of execution. The Christian chant was archaic in origin, being derived chiefly from the Psalm tunes that had been sung for many centuries in the Jewish Temple. These melodies, the Church made her own; adopting also the scientific musical system of the Greeks which, in early Christian times, was the only existing theoretical basis for the art of music.

So profound was the influence of the ecclesiastical chant, that all medieval music, both religious and profane, was governed by its laws; the result was that a scale system modelled on the ancient Greek modes prevailed in all art music until after Palestrina's day and, in conformity with church music, secular music remained diatonic until the early fifteenth century. Practically

all the material of art music was drawn from the same ecclesiastical source. The beginnings of contrapuntal development are to be seen in the primitive types of polyphony which were in succession grafted on the unison chant: *organum* (in fourths, fifths and octaves), and the later *faux-bourdon* (consisting practically of a succession of chords of the sixth). It was also the liturgical chant which provided the early polyphonic composers with the foundation on which they erected their contrapuntal structures—the fundamental themes which they used for the *canto fermo*.

Still more important was the influence of the church chant on melodic development. For the origin of pure melody can be found in those ornamental passages, those lyrical *cantilene*, that so frequently break the uniformity of the liturgical recitative. Such independent melodic phrases or *melismae*, which lightened the severity of the plain chant, were to play an important rôle in art music; they are a feature of early organ music and reappear in most medieval song-types. The liturgical chant, besides being the source of art music, also left its mark on early folk-music which, after developing on independent lines, was later to provide a rival, secularising influence.

The official choir, which became the model for all liturgical performances, was that attached to the chief Roman basilica: originally San Giovanni in Laterano, the church adjoining the Lateran Palace, where the Popes resided from the sixth to the end of the fourteenth century.[1] Regarding the early history of the choir, we know few authentic details of importance; the foundation of singing-schools by Pope Sylvester in the fourth century is denied by many authorities, and the metrical Ambrosian Chant—still to be heard to-day in St. Ambrose's diocese of Milan—had only a temporary influence in Rome.

The earliest significant incident connected with Roman liturgical singing was the foundation of the Schola Cantorum by Pope Gregory the Great at the close of the sixth century. The Schola—a guild or society of singers—had for its nucleus the clerical school directed by the Benedictines whom Pelagius II, Pope Gregory's predecessor, had installed in part of the Lateran Palace, about the year 580, after their famous monastery of Monte Cassino had been destroyed by the Lombards. In connection with the Lateran Schola Cantorum—which was to direct church music for seven centuries—another choir school was founded which had its quarters near the Basilica of St. Peter's.

St. Gregory attached so much importance to church music that he gave close personal attention to both its theoretical and practical aspects. He reformed the chant and the modal system on which it was based, compiled a new antiphonary, personally supervised the training of the choristers, and made the Roman chant the model of liturgical song for the whole world. The result was that the Gregorian chant—as it came to be called—struck such deep roots in most European countries, that traces of its influence

[1] It was only at the close of the fourteenth century, when Pope Gregory XI transferred the Papal See from Avignon back to Rome, that the Vatican became the Papal residence.

remain to this day in local folk-song. The prestige of the Papal choir increased with the centuries and clerics came from foreign lands to study the correct manner of executing the chant; so that the Schola Cantorum became the chief authority in the art of Song—the first Music School in the world.

The natural tendency in such a choir being to preserve purity of tradition, the technical innovations of the succeeding centuries were accepted only after much consideration; no new musical developments were sanctioned that appeared to be in conflict with the established laws, or likely to mar the solemnity of the services. Gradually, however, part-singing was introduced. How soon the Schola Cantorum adopted those early forms of polyphony, the *organum* and the *diaphonia*, is not known for certain; but some authorities hold that, already at the end of the seventh century (that is, long before the days of Hucbald), the Papal choir accompanied the liturgical chant with improvised secondary parts in a primitive counterpoint. When Guido of Arezzo began to teach his new systems of notation and singing, in the beginning of the eleventh century, Pope John XIX sent for him and made him expound his theories to the Papal choir; it is supposed that they thereupon adopted the use of his more developed form of *organum*. That the Roman choir acquired great vocal skill is evident from the difficult passages which occur in many of the medieval musical MSS they used; only highly-trained singers could have attempted the intricate grace-notes and elaborate *fioriture* with which the early chant became ornamented. The Schola Cantorum executed this music with such technical perfection that they were recognized as unrivalled virtuosi.

As the Liturgy developed, the duties of the singers became strictly defined; and in all solemn ceremonies their services were essential. Owing to their importance in the ritual, the members of the Schola acquired a certain rank in the Papal household, as is seen from the costume assigned to them on State occasions; the ordinary cantors being dressed as canons, while the leader of the choir (known as the Primicerius) wore the robes of a prelate. Apart from their duties in connection with the functions held at the Lateran Basilica, the Schola Cantorum played a prominent part in the ritual processions, held on all great feast days, when the Pope and his court went in state from one appointed basilica to another.

There were many similar ceremonies in medieval Rome; one of the most spectacular being the cavalcade which took place at each Papal coronation, when the newly-crowned Pope, followed by his suite of clerical dignitaries and secular princes, would ride from St. Peter's along the ancient Via Sacra to take possession of the Lateran Basilica, where he was welcomed with festive canticles. The Schola Cantorum, and the choirs of the churches situated along the route, took part in these coronation processions which, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, became events of both ecclesiastical and civic importance. The churches, as well as the houses and palaces of the Romans—now a curious medley of classical and medieval architecture which had sprung up amidst the half-demolished ruins of ancient Rome—were magnificently decorated in honour of the occasion. Many-coloured

brocades and carpets hung from balconies and windows; and flowers were scattered on the procession which was met at intervals by groups of choristers and by bands of women and children bearing palms and branches of laurel.

Each of the chief religious festivals was celebrated by some special public ceremony in which music played a part. On the feast of the Annunciation, the Pope drove in state to Santa Maria sopra Minerva, where the choir greeted him with *motets*. On the eve of the Assumption, when a nocturnal procession, lighted by hundreds of torches and lanterns, passed through the ruins of the Roman Forum on its way to Santa Maria Maggiore, the singing was entrusted to the Schola Greca, the choir of a Byzantine military association. During this brilliant period of medieval Roman existence, the city continued to be beautified by new churches and palaces and enriched by marvellous art treasures, notwithstanding such ominous portents as the constant struggles between the Popes and citizens and the hostile factions of the nobles. This era reached its climax in the Papal Jubilee of the year 1300, which brought throngs of pilgrims to Rome from all Christian lands.

Although time and again during the Middle Ages, the havoc wrought by barbarian invaders had destroyed the cultural life of Rome for long periods, the Schola Cantorum had, in some marvellous manner, managed to survive. Thanks to its uninterrupted activities, church music, alone among the arts, was continuously cultivated even during the worst days of medieval disorder and upheaval; and the Schola, to which was largely due the preservation of musical tradition and the development of the art during the Middle Ages, was still flourishing at the dawn of the disastrous fourteenth century. But the withdrawal of the Papal See to Avignon, for the greater part of this century, which left Rome at the mercy of the warring Barons, not only brought desolation to the city; it resulted also in the extinction of the famous Lateran Choir.

During the absence of the Papal court, the Schola Cantorum remained in Rome attached, as before, to the service of the Lateran Basilica. Meanwhile, as the residence of the Popes at Avignon became prolonged, a new Papal choir was formed there, composed of French clerics who introduced the style of singing then prevalent in northern France and Flanders. But their daring use of discords, their tendency to disfigure the Gregorian melodies and to sacrifice the text to the music, led to such abuses that, in 1322, Pope John XXII issued a decree regulating the use of counterpoint and limiting the permissible intervals to the fourth, fifth and octave of the old *organum*.

During the course of the fourteenth century, another simple form of polyphony was sanctioned: the *faux-bourdon*,[1] which consisted practically of a succession of chords of the sixth.

[1] The *Faux-Bourdon* is said to be derived from an early English type of Discant, known as "Gymel," in which the Plain Song Chant was accompanied by another part, taken a third above or below the theme or *Cantus Firmus*.

In northern countries, like England, which were outside the sphere of classical

Of great significance for the future development of music in Italy was the fact that, during the Avignon period, music was undergoing important transformations in northern France and Flanders. It was then that the French mathematician, Jean de Muris, invented the system of mensural music out of which modern notation was to be evolved; and it was during this century that the Flemish school of counterpoint began to develop. The new ideas were introduced into the Papal choir by the French and Flemish singers; with the result that when the Popes returned to Rome the foreigners, now firmly established as Papal cantors, brought to Italy the Flemish contrapuntal art that was to influence all music, religious and secular, for two centuries.

The northern choir made its first appearance in Italy under interesting circumstances. It was sixty years after the transference of the Papal See to Avignon that Pope Urban V decided to return at least temporarily to Italy, in answer to the agonized appeals of the Romans who had meanwhile seen their city devastated by wars, earthquakes, fire and plague. Amongst those who had protested most strongly against the Pope's lack of interest in the state of Rome, was the poet Petrarch. In one of his famous Epistles, he asks how Pope Urban can sleep peacefully under the golden roof of his palace on the banks of the Rhône, whilst the Lateran, the mother of all the churches, lies roofless, at the mercy of wind and rain.

Pope Urban set sail for Italy one day in May, 1367, accompanied by his household and his choir. When the Papal court landed at Corneto, near Civita Vecchia, tents were immediately set up and Mass was sung on the seashore. It was in this picturesque environment that the Avignon choir performed for the first time on Italian soil. The Pope, who found Rome a city of ruins, saw to the restoration of the Lateran and Vatican Basilicas and rebuilt many of the other important churches. But, instead of giving new life to the Schola Cantorum, which still lingered on, he dealt this ancient institution its death blow. As he could see no necessity for keeping on the Lateran choir, now that the Papal court possessed a modern French one, Pope Urban V made over by Bull to the Lateran Basilica all the lands out of which the Schola had drawn its income; and by this act, he terminated the existence of the famous choir whose origins were connected with the earliest traditions of church music.

Pope Urban's three years' visit to Italy had a rather dramatic sequel. Unwilling to remain in Rome—still the scene of desperate struggles between the Barons and the Commune—the Pope decided to return to France, though the Roman citizens begged him to remain and St. Brigid of Sweden prophesied that he would die if he left Italy. Her prediction came true. It was in the autumn of 1370 that Pope Urban set out for Avignon; and he died there before the year ended.

Seven years later, at the instance of St. Catherine of Siena, Pope Gregory XI transferred the Papal See permanently to Rome. He brought the Avignon

influence, the "natural" third was accepted as a consonance from an early date; while the much sharper "Pythagorean" third, which Italy had inherited from the Greeks, was avoided as a dissonance.

singers with him. The contrapuntal music sung at the Papal ceremonies was now completely Flemish in style; and the most famous of the northern composers wrote Masses, Psalm-settings and *motets* for the Pontifical choir which, for over a century, continued to be recruited from Flanders and France. The improvisation of parts to a Gregorian chant remained an important element in church music and was still practised by all choristers; but none were greater adepts in this art than the Papal cantors, most of whom were noted composers.

The celebrated collection of early polyphonic church music belonging to the Vatican Library includes the works of the chief Flemish composers of the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Their names were well known all over Italy; for these singer-composers belonged either to the Papal choir or to the household of one or other of the Italian Renaisssance princes; or else their fame had spread from the courts of Paris or Burgundy.

Soon after the return from Avignon, the Papal choir counted among its members the first noteworthy Flemish composer, Guillaume Dufay. His Masses, and those of two other contemporary Papal cantors, Redois and Flannel, illustrate the first stage of Flemish polyphony. Their counterpoint sounds primitive to our ears, yet they show skill in the use of canonical imitation; and much of Dufay's music has a fresh melodic charm which may possibly be attributed to Italian influence. Like the polyphonic improvisations of previous centuries, the Masses of these composers were based on a Gregorian theme, the melody and words of which were sung throughout by the *tenor;* whilst, around this *canto fermo*, the other voices wove their counterpoint to the liturgical words of the *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, *Credo* and other sung portions of the Mass.

With the following generation of composers, who flourished in the mid-fifteenth century, the polyphony became so recondite and the rhythms so complicated, that it has been said no one could have attempted to sing their works who was not "a mathematician to his fingertips." Yet there is music of real beauty in the compositions of the Flemish composers: Ockeghem, Obrecht and Tinctoris, whose Masses were performed by the Roman choirs of that day. Tinctoris, who gave music its first impetus in Naples and who was also famous as a writer on music, expressed the most enthusiastic admiration for the achievements of his contemporaries, both as singers and composers; declaring, in the preface to his *Art of Counterpoint*, that he does not know whether to attribute their perfection "to long practice or to heavenly inspiration."

Most of the musicians who made their way from Flanders and northern France to the big Italian cities towards the end of the fifteenth century were composers of church music. And although the names of Heinrich Isaac, Brumel, Alexander Agricola, Verdelot, Gaspar Weerbecke, are chiefly connected with Florence, Ferrara, Mantua, Venice and Milan, Rome, too, knew their works, which are preserved in the Vatican Library. All these names, however, are eclipsed by that of Josquin des Près, who belonged

for a time to the Pontifical choir and whose attainments as a singer and composer made him famous all over Europe. For beauty of melody and harmoniousness of contrapuntal fabric, his music surpassed that of all his contemporaries; but like most of them, he often ignored the meaning of the text to which he wrote.

In the period immediately preceding Palestrina, the most noteworthy composers among the Papal cantors were: Arcadelt, Genêt (also known as Carpentras), and Firmin Le Bel. The choir also sang Masses by Adrian Willaert, then established at Venice and sending pupils of his to the Pope's choir. Very significant is the name of Costanzo Festa, the first Italian of note among the Papal singers and a gifted composer. His "a Cappella" *fugues* and his *madrigals* herald the advent of the new Roman School which avoided the artificiality that characterized the Flemish School in its decadence, and gave church music greater nobility of style and depth of expression.

All the musical life of fifteenth and sixteenth-century Rome centred in the choirs which increased in numbers as each important church acquired its own body of choristers and its own choir-school. After the Papal choir, the most famous were those connected with the Basilicas of St. John Lateran and Santa Maria Maggiore, the church of Santa Maria in Trastevere, the French church of San Luigi, and that of the Collegio Romano.

At the end of the fifteenth century, about a hundred years after the return from Avignon, the reigning Pope, Sixtus IV, made a fundamental change in the organization of his choir. Having built the famous chapel in the Vatican Palace—called after him the Cappella Sistina—he limited the duties of the Pontifical cantors to the services held daily in this beautiful private oratory; and henceforth, the Papal choir became known as the "Sistine."

At the same time, this Pope founded a separate choral group for St. Peter's which, on being endowed in the early sixteenth century by Pope Julius II, was named after him the "Julian" choir. These two choirs, famous for over two centuries, are still in existence. The Julian, attached to the service of the Basilica of St. Peter's, tended from its foundation to employ Italian singers; but, for long, the Sistine choir continued to be recruited from amongst those excellent French and Flemish musicians who wandered from one Italian court to another seeking fresh change of scene or tempted by a higher salary.

The *Diary of the Sistine Choir* perpetuates the names of its members and adds various interesting details concerning their service and their private lives. The earliest volume now in existence begins with the year 1535; but such registers were undoubtedly kept long before that date. It is probable that, like so many other valuable documents, the earlier volumes were destroyed in the terrible Sack of Rome by the troops of the Connêtable de Bourbon, in 1527. In addition to the election of new choristers, the Diary records the fines for unpunctuality or non-attendance; special celebrations at which the choir assisted in various Roman churches; the presents made to the singers by the Pope on festive occasions. It also registers the date of

each cantor's death, the singing of the Requiem Mass by his colleagues, the place of his interment and the name of his successor.

Thus, we read that Blasius (Nuñez), having been absent from an entire service, was fined seven baiocchi (35 centisimi); that Giovanni Cocu (Joannis de Cambray) moved to a new house on 27th February, 1535, and presumably had leave of absence for the occasion; that, on 1st January of that same year, the Pope (Paul III) gave the choir as a New Year's gift: four ducats, two boxes of confectionery, and two flasks of wine—presents which recur on the principal feast days.

In addition to their regular duties in connection with the services in the Sistine chapel, the choir sang at the Pope's meals on important festivals. This custom, which was continued until the mid-eighteenth century, was of very ancient origin; one old document mentions the singing of the choir at the dinner of Pope Celestino II on Christmas Day, 1143. The innovations in part-singing, that were so rigidly excluded from the church services, are said to have been tolerated on these secular occasions.

Monsignor Baini, an eighteenth-century director of the Sistine choir, and Palestrina's chief biographer, describes the procedure as follows: "after the Pope had drunk for the first time, the choir began to sing. They usually performed three or four *motets*, the texts of which made allusion to the particular feast-day that was being celebrated, or introduced the name of any personage of high rank, King or other notability, that might be present as a guest at the Pope's table."

As time went on, the wider use of music favoured the development of the art. Vocal and instrumental types were evolved in connection with the coronation ceremonies of Popes and Emperors, and the various processions and pageants; and music always accompanied the dramatic performances which, in Rome, under the influence of the Papal court, were at this period usually religious in character.

One of the earliest types of drama to incorporate a musical element was the Mystery Play; the most important development in this domain being the Passion Plays held yearly on Good Friday in the ruins of the Colosseum. The first of these plays of which there is any record was given by the Confraternity of the Gonfalone (Standard-bearers), in 1414; they were continued for over a century. From an early date, Christmas too, had its special music in the form of a *Cantata* "per la Notte di Natale" (for Christmas night), which was performed yearly at the Papal court.

Both religious and secular music flourished in the Vatican Palace during the reign of the Medici Pope, Leo X. While still a Cardinal, Giovanni de' Medici had already gathered about him many good singers and instrumentalists whom he treated with great generosity; and on the death of his father, Lorenzo the Magnificent, he granted a yearly pension to his old music master, the Flemish composer, Heinrich Isaac; thus enabling him to end his days in Florence.

As Pope Leo X, Giovanni de' Medici gave a great impetus not only to sculpture and painting but also to music which was now beginning

to rival the older arts. During his pontificate, the Sistine choir became a picked body. Amongst the cantors appointed during his day was the Italian Costanzo Festa; and the fame of some of Leo X's French and Flemish singers is celebrated in the verse:

> "O felix Bido, Carpentras, Sylvaque, Broier,
> Vosque leonine cantorum squadra capellæ."

In his private household, Leo X employed a number of other musicians. A sixteenth-century book, Bartolo's *Ragionamente Accademia*, written in the then popular dialogue form, introduces the names of the singers and instrumentalists who were most appreciated at the courts of the Renaissance Popes. The conversation begins with the question: "Which do you prefer, singing or instrumental music?" "I prefer instrumental music," is the reply, "because some voices are rough and out of tune." "You would not say that," remarks the first speaker, "if in Leo X's time, you had heard Carpentras, Consiglion, Bidon, Biaseron. . . ." The conversation then turns to the instrumentalists, who were usually singers as well, and capable of adapting their songs to the viol, lute, cembalo or trombone. The two speakers discuss the merits of Alfonso della Viola, Il Siciliano di Viola, Antonio and Lorenzo di Lucca, the composer Alessandro Striggio, Giovan, Maestro del Cornetto, Girolamo and Bartolomeo Trombone and Jaches de Ferrara, the song writer, long attached to the d'Este court, who was also well known as a virtuoso on several instruments.

The instrumentalists belonging to the Papal household were heard only at secular entertainments. Grouped in seemingly haphazard combinations, they formed the bands which played between the acts at dramatic performances. The plays acted were mostly dramas by Ariosto or Machiavelli; and Raphael painted the scenery for some of them. Alfonso Paolucci, Ambassador to the Duke of Ferrara, described the constitution of the primitive orchestra he heard at one of the entertainments given at the court of Leo X, in 1519. "Was at the Play on Sunday evening," he wrote. "The interlude between the acts was played by fifes, bagpipes, two cornetti, viols, lutes and a small organ; there was also a concert of vocal music which, in my opinion, was not so good as the instrumental performance."

Like so many secular Renaissance princes, this Medici Pope was something of a musician himself; he had composed five-part *Chansons* in his youth, and he played both the organ and the cembalo of which he owned some famous specimens. Lorenzo Gusnasco, who made so many beautiful instruments for the d'Este princesses, wrote to Isabella on one occasion of a cembalo he had just finished and was taking to Rome to Pope Leo.

Music was cultivated with equal zest under two other Renaissance Popes: Leo X's cousin, Clement VII, and his friend from early youth, the Farnese Pope, Paul III. According to the usual custom of medieval rulers, the Popes had from early times kept a band of wind-instruments which accompanied them on public occasions; they were known as the

"Musicians of Castel Sant'Angelo." Benvenuto Cellini was for a time a member of this band, during the reign of Pope Clement VII. How this came about, he explains in his *Memoirs* as follows: "Giangiacomo da Cesena, an excellent musician belonging to the Pope's band, sent Lorenzo Trombone di Lucca to ask me to help them by playing the soprano part on my cornetto in some *motets* they were performing for the Pope's *Ferragosto* (mid-August Festival)." Pope Clement VII was so pleased with the result that Cellini, much to his annoyance, was pressed to become a member of the band. He hesitated; but terrified by a dream he had that night, in which his music-loving father cursed him, he accepted the post next day.

Clement VII, like his cousin Leo X, took great pleasure in the key-board instruments. In his list of early sixteenth-century musicians employed at the Papal court, Bartolo mentions the virtuoso, Julio da Modena, whose music held such enchantment that it made public men forget affairs of State. He relates that "one evening, the Marchese del Vasto, General of the Florentine army, arrived in Rome by diligence and hurried, still booted and spurred, to confer with Pope Clement." But, during their conference, Julio da Modena began to play the cembalo at the other end of the Pope's room, whereupon "they stopped their important discussion and went over to listen to him."

Clement's successor, Pope Paul III, gave even greater importance to music. He increased the Sistine choir from twenty-two to thirty singers; the majority were still Flemish or French, but the proportion of Italians was increasing. For his private entertainments, this Pope engaged several players of the cembalo, viol and lute. One of his favourite musicians was the lutenist, Francesco Canova da Milano, whose probable portrait, under the title "Francesco del Liuto," is to be seen in the Ambrosian Gallery, Milan. He had well-known wind instrumentalists in his band, and the Papal accounts show that these "Musicians of Castel Sant'Angelo" were given money to buy horses in order that they might accompany Pope Paul III when he went to Nice in 1538, to make peace between the Emperor Charles the Fifth and Francis the First of France.

CHAPTER III

ROME (CONTD.): PALESTRINA; THE ORATORIO; FRESCOBALDI; THE ORGAN

IT was for a Papal court keenly interested in all known forms of music that Palestrina was soon to produce his masterpieces. In the third decade of the sixteenth century, during the pontificate of Paul III, Giovanni Pierluigi, a little chorister from the adjacent hill town of Palestrina, came to Rome, and was admitted to the choir-school of the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore. There he received his musical training; his masters being in all probability the three successive choir-directors: Rubino Mallapert, Robert de Févin and Firmin Le Bel of Noyon. The only trace of his name at this period is a document in the basilica archives, dated 25th October, 1537, which records that Giovanni Pierluigi of Palestrina was at that date one of the six "pueri cantantes" (choir boys) who, for a period of six years, received instruction in singing, counterpoint and grammar, and were, in addition, fed and clothed and lodged in the house of the choir-master.

During the early part of his career Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina was director in turn of each of the chief basilica choirs: St. Peter's, St. John Lateran and Santa Maria Maggiore; he was also connected with the Sistine choir, first as cantor, later as official composer. At the age of twenty-five, Palestrina was appointed choir-master of the Cappella Giulia at St. Peter's; but he was soon obliged to relinquish this post owing to a decision to restrict the membership to clerics. After some years spent as choir-master, first at St. John Lateran and later at Santa Maria Maggiore, Palestrina was reinstated as director of the choir of St. Peter's in 1571. That his talents as a composer were already highly appreciated, is evident from the fact that, prior to this, Pope Pius IV had paid Palestrina the unprecedented honour of creating for him the post of "Official Composer to the Sistine Choir." The Pope thus secured for his choir the services of Palestrina who, as a married man, was debarred from ordinary membership.

The circumstance which gave Palestrina an opportunity of proving his genius, and which placed him in a position of acknowledged superiority over his contemporaries, was the reform of church music ordered by the ecclesiastical authorities in 1562. In that year, the Council of Trent passed a decree prohibiting the performance of many unsuitable Masses which were entirely alien to the spirit of the religious services. The Gregorian melodies originally used in *canto fermo* in the tenor voice as a thematic basis, had come to be replaced in most Masses of that day by themes from popular songs or *madrigals* which were often sung to the secular words. The interest of composers being generally centred in contrapuntal problems, they paid little attention to the sacred text.

At the request of Cardinal Borromeo (St. Charles Borromeo), who was a member of the Commission appointed to supervise the musical reforms, Palestrina wrote three Masses in a noble, solemn style, in keeping with the spirit of the Liturgy. At the trial performance, the third of these works, now known as *Missa Papae Marcelli*, aroused great enthusiasm. According to Baini, Pope Pius IV exclaimed that such must be the music of the Angels in the New Jerusalem; and two Cardinals quoted verses from Dante's *Paradiso* to express in fitting words the beauty of the "divina cantilena."

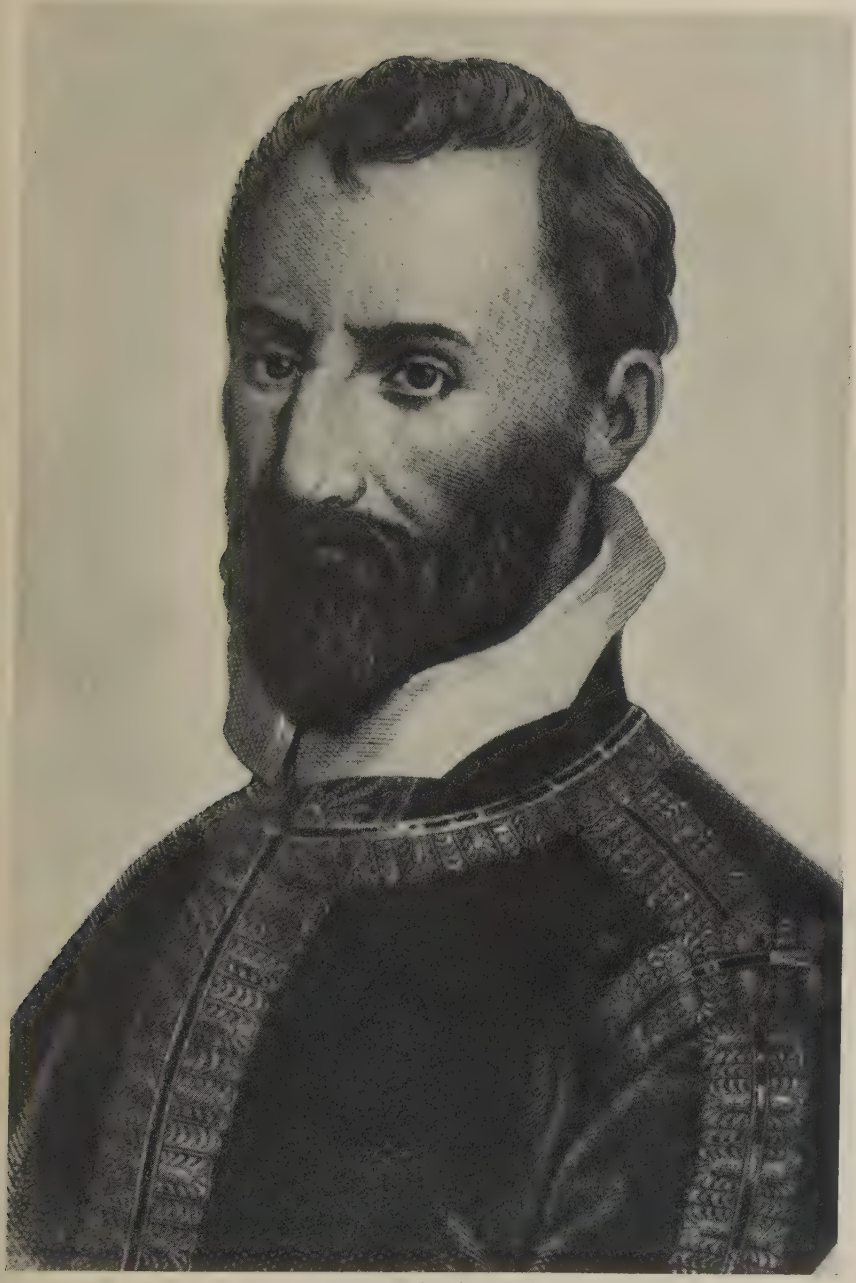
Yet, Palestrina had invented no new forms, had introduced no technical innovations. His Masses were written in the ordinary polyphonic style of that period, and in the purely choral or "a cappella" form. Palestrina's great merit consisted in subordinating his musical material to the liturgical text. In so doing, he concealed, with true artistry, a contrapuntal skill equal to that of the greatest Flemish masters. Though deeply expressive, Palestrina's music gave no dramatic interpretation of the words, such as characterized the Venetian school that was then developing. The Roman master's art retained a classical impersonality. It was above all in its spiritual atmosphere that Palestrina's music surpassed that of his predecessors and contemporaries. His fertility was equally remarkable; he wrote ninety-three Masses, as well as a great deal of other church music.

The *madrigal* form also attracted Palestrina, but he was less successful in this domain. Songs of this type were, however, in great demand for the entertainments given by the cardinals and princes attached to the Papal court, who had begun to set up musical households during the sixteenth century and who engaged important composers to superintend their concerts. Palestrina filled several such posts. He was musical director to Pope Gregory XIII's nephew, Prince Giacomo Boncompagni, to whom he dedicated his first book of *madrigals*. He was also in charge of the "Concerti da Camera" held at the Palace of Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini, nephew of Clement VIII. To this enthusiastic patron of music, Palestrina dedicated his last book of Masses.

In the judgment of posterity, Palestrina eclipses all his contemporaries; but the Roman choirs of the sixteenth century contained many other excellent composers, Flemish and Italian, as well as two famous Spaniards, Morales and Vittoria.

Foreigners still held important positions in Rome in the first half of the sixteenth century. The great Orlando di Lasso was choir-master at the Basilica of St. John Lateran in 1548; and Jacob Arcadelt had been chosen as the first director of the Cappella Giulia. But gradually, the Roman School increased in significance until, in addition to Palestrina and Festa, it counted such celebrated representatives as: Giovanni Animuccia, Annibale Stabile, Felice and Giovanni Anerio, Giovanni and Bernardo Nanini, Luca Marenzio and, later, Gregorio Allegri—to mention only the greatest of the many composers who provided the Roman choirs with a variety of Masses, motets, hymns and psalm-settings.

Even in this ecclesiastical environment, secular music began to assert



Portrait of Palestrina.
(*Photo: Ballerini e Fratini, Florence.*)

Detail of Veronese's "Nozze di Cana" showing group of famous Painters playing various musical instruments: Veronese (treble viol), Tintoretto (tenor viol), Titian (bass viol), and Bassano Vecchio (flute).

(Photo Anderson, Rome)

itself. Two sixteenth-century Papal cantors, Costanzo Festa and Luca Marenzio, distinguished themselves particularly as composers of *madrigals*. This song-form was still the most highly developed type of non-liturgical music. It had a great attraction for sixteenth-century composers since, being secular, it allowed of a certain freedom of treatment. It enabled them to exploit new technical formulæ, to give freer play to the expression of emotion; until, hampered by the narrow limits of the *madrigal*, composers sought an outlet in bigger, more dramatic, forms.

The oldest dramatic type, the medieval Mystery Play, in vogue since the eleventh century, had always introduced some musical element, such as the singing of hymns or *Laude*, appropriate to the subject treated. Gradually, the musical element became more important until eventually, out of these religious dramas or "Sacre Rappresentazioni," Rome developed a new form, the *oratorio*. It is significant, that like the Masses of Palestrina, the *oratorio* began to develop in the mid-sixteenth century, the period of Rome's musical maturity.

The *oratorio*, as is well known, owes its name to the fact that such performances were first given in a chapel or *oratorio*. It was St. Philip Neri who inaugurated these half-religious, half-secular, services—consisting of music and sermons—with a view to attracting the Romans and reviving religious fervour. He first used for this purpose a room over the church of San Girolamo della Carità, and later, in 1583, transferred these activities to the oratory adjoining his new church, Santa Maria in Vallicella, which became famous in this connection. As his musical coadjutor, St. Philip chose Animuccia, the choir-master of St. Peter's, who used to bring some of the Papal cantors with him to sing the *Laude Spirituali*—religious part-songs written to Italian verses, often in dialogue form—which he composed for St. Philip's *oratorio*.

Meanwhile, towards the close of the sixteenth century, similar musical services were organized in the Oratory of the Confraternity of the Crucifix of San Marcello, under the directorship of Luca Marenzio, Papal singer and composer. In this oratory, the musical element consisted at first of two Latin *motets*, between which a sermon was preached. In course of time, in both oratories, the music encroached on the other elements. The sermons were replaced by recitative renderings of passages from the Bible; and the foundations of the future *oratorio* were laid. On the death of Animuccia, St. Philip Neri appointed Palestrina his musical director and the famous composer to the Sistine choir also wrote many simple three- and four-part *Laude* for the Oratory of Santa Maria in Vallicella.

One of the objects of these oratorical performances had been to counteract the growth of the worldly spirit in music which the Florentine operatic movement was then fostering. But so strong was this secular tendency, that the dramatic element soon invaded even the peaceful precincts of the Roman oratories. Amongst the members of the Florentine "Camerata," who created the opera, were two Romans: Caccini and Emilio del Cavaliere. The sacred drama which Cavaliere wrote for his native town and which was produced

at the oratory adjoining Santa Maria in Vallicella in the year 1600, shows how deeply he was imbued with the new ideas.

This important work, entitled *Rappresentazione di Anima e di Corpo* (The Drama of Soul and Body), was much more dramatic in treatment than the oratorios or the morality plays hitherto performed. Cavaliere's play required scenery, action and dancing; a hidden orchestra played short five-part *Sinfonie*, which represent in miniature an overture and interludes; and the new taste for monody with instrumental accompaniment is here illustrated, for each character carried an instrument on which he pretended to accompany himself.[1]

The currents of art were rapidly changing under the influence of new artistic ideals. But, although monody was creeping even into ecclesiastical music, the polyphonic choral style was too deeply rooted in Rome to decay there as suddenly as it did in many other centres at the turn of the sixteenth century. The ancient Roman *Ars Canendis* survived long on native soil as the most important branch of music, thanks to the well-organized Roman choirs in which the tradition was faithfully preserved.

In the choir schools—which were the musical conservatoires of that day—great masters, like Palestrina, Animuccia and Giovanni Nanini, had amongst their pupils the future composers: Soriano, Stabile, and the two Anerio, Luca Marenzio and Bernardo Nanini; these in their turn, handed on the accepted methods and standards to Gregorio Allegri, Cifra, Landi, Benevoli, etc. So that at least three successive generations of musicians preserved the best traditions of vocal church music in Rome or carried them abroad to the chief European centres.

The great change in the general artistic outlook which became evident in Rome during the seventeenth century, seems to be symbolized for us, who see this period in perspective, by the transformation of the Basilica of St. Peter's. The ancient church, which was linked with nearly twelve hundred years of Christian worship, had been for over a century in the hands of architects and builders. Now, in the early seventeenth century, the work of reconstruction was complete; the original church had been entirely demolished; and St. Peter's appeared in its present guise—a mighty monument to Renaissance art.

The music performed within its walls underwent a somewhat similar evolution. It was in the old St. Peter's (part of which had been walled-off for use during the rebuilding), that Palestrina's Masses had first been sung; in the austere, medieval Basilica his sublime music had had its appropriate setting. The consecration of the Renaissance Basilica synchronizes with the introduction of new types of music of a less ascetic character. The first

[1] The subject is akin to that of the old Morality Plays. In an introductory solo, "Time" gives warning of his fleeting: "Il Tempo, il Tempo fugge"; whilst in the first lines of their opening dialogue, the two principal characters, the Soul and the Body, expose the theme of the play:

The Body: "Anima mia, che pensi, perche dogliosa stai?"

The Soul: "Vorrei riposo e pace."

("My soul, what are thy thoughts, why art thou sad?" "I long for peace and rest".)

noteworthy examples of this tendency are the "Concerti da Chiesa" (Church Concertos) composed by the Papal singer, Viadana, in 1604, in which the use of the Ariosa form betrays the influence of the Florentine monodic style hitherto avoided by Roman church composers.

Another sign of changing conditions was the growing importance of the rôle of the organ in church services. It was in this domain that the next noteworthy development in Rome occurred; for, in the period following on Palestrina's death, the outstanding musical personality was the organist of St. Peter's, Gerolamo Frescobaldi.

In Rome, where the organ tradition went back to pagan days, the instrument had been used in the churches at least from the twelfth century, and probably earlier; but the destruction of the archives during the frequent medieval wars and invasions makes it impossible to find authentic data concerning more remote times. During the late Middle Ages, the organ had been introduced into the churches all over Italy; and to judge from the names of the organ builders, the industry was very widespread. In addition to the Venetians, who for centuries developed and improved the structure of the instrument, organ-building was carried on also in Padua, Bologna, Florence, Brescia, Milan, Lucca, Turin, Genoa, Rome and in a number of other Italian towns.

The technical details mentioned in old contracts illustrate the gradual improvement in the construction of the instrument by successive generations of organ builders; while their names show that, although the majority were Italians, many Germans were employed, especially in northern Italy.

When one Matteo d'Allemagna, organist at Mantua, was engaged to build an organ for the church of Sant'Antonio at Cremona in 1441, the contract stipulated that the instrument should be "of the modern type, and have twenty-seven keys, fitted with all their semitones; and that it should be made in as perfect, and finished, and beautiful a manner as could be conceived and executed." From similar sources, it is evident that stops were introduced about this time; whilst a clause in an agreement concerning an organ built for a church in Lucca, in 1480, mentions that it should have "pedals of the usual Italian type." A famous instrument was installed about this time in the Basilica of San Petronio at Bologna. And Milan Cathedral, which had been provided with an organ at the end of the fourteenth century, possessed in the mid-sixteenth century a big instrument with the Italian "ripieno" stop which enriched the tone with harmonics.

Although the organ was never introduced into the Pope's private chapel, the Cappella Sistina, it was used from an early date in St. Peter's and in other Roman churches. The instrument was at first limited to a solo rôle, being heard only in the intervals between the choral performances, when the organist played imitations of vocal polyphonic music or improvised in a similar style. Not until the sixteenth century was the organ used to accompany the voices.

There was evidently a demand for organ music in Rome at this time; for, in 1513, Pope Leo X gave permission to Petrucci (who, for political

reasons, had had to leave Venice) to set up works in Rome for the printing of organ tablatures, which consisted of arrangements of songs and lute music; while, a few years later, the Roman, Antigo, published a collection of *Frottole* adapted to the organ. Such little pieces, and the *Ricercare* and *Toccatas* that were then being invented in Bologna and Venice, constituted the musical material for the instrument that was soon to produce such grandiose effects.

It was Gerolamo Frescobaldi of Ferrara who, in the early seventeenth century, raised the organ to a position of dignity and importance. His native town had maintained its ancient artistic traditions and had remained throughout the sixteenth century one of the chief music centres in Italy. Frescobaldi's master, the organist and *madrigal* composer, Luzzazco Luzzaschi, was one of the many excellent musicians employed at the court of the d'Este at Ferrara. Himself a pupil of de Rore—choir-master of San Marco, Venice—Luzzaschi was a fervent disciple of the Venetian School. Thanks to him, Frescobaldi became familiar with the instrumental developments in Venice, in particular with the organ music of Claudio Merulo and the two Gabrieli. In their works, Frescobaldi's creative genius found the germ of his own more mature style, while his virtuosity enabled him to exploit the technical capacity of the instrument to a degree hitherto unknown.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, Venice was turning from church music to the new secular forms. Rome, where Palestrina's art still set the æsthetic standard, offered the young organist Frescobaldi, a more congenial environment. Little is known of Frescobaldi's first years in Rome beyond the fact that in 1604, when he was twenty-one years of age, his name was entered as organist and singer, on the roll of membership of the "Confraternità dei musici di Roma sotto l'invocazione di Santa Cecilia"—a musical society of which Palestrina had been one of the founders.

It was no doubt thanks to the influence of his fellow-townsman, Cardinal Bentivoglio, that Frescobaldi was appointed organist at St. Peter's four years later. His reputation was already so great that thirty-thousand people are said to have come to hear him the first time he played there. To the end of his days, his chief activities were connected with the Vatican Basilica.

There are but scanty records of the early use of organs at St. Peter's. But, from old memoranda concerning their re-painting and reconstruction, it would appear that the instrument on which Frescobaldi played was—in a remodelled form—the oldest of which any details exist, namely: the thirteenth-century organ built by a German, Magister Paulus Wenchen, "pro salute animæ suæ et parentus suorum" (for the salvation of his soul and the souls of his relatives).

If Frescobaldi's organ-playing won the admiration of his contemporaries, this was not due alone to his technical skill but, equally, to the charm and originality of his compositions. Frescobaldi freed the instrumental *Fugue* from the rigid laws that governed medieval vocal polyphony. In addition, by following out to their logical conclusion the vague thematic formulæ of the Venetian organ composers, he discovered the secret of thematic

development. Hitherto, instrumental music had been fragmentary and disconnected. Frescobaldi was the first to achieve artistic unity by constructing consecutive movements on the one germ theme, presented in varying rhythmic patterns. He thus created a type of composition akin to both the *variation* and the *sonata* forms, which laid the foundation of the great instrumental music of the future.

Other keyboard instruments, such as the cembalo, then coming into favour, naturally profited by these innovations in form. Both Frescobaldi and Bernardo Pasquini, the most famous Roman organist of the next generation, were skilled performers on the cembalo for which they wrote a number of works. But this type of keyboard music was to be brought to a much higher stage of development later, by Domenico Scarlatti.

In the domain of instrumental music, it was chiefly as a school of organ-playing that Rome was celebrated in the mid-seventeenth century. Numbers of German musicians came to study there. Frescobaldi taught Johann Kaspar Kerll and the famous Hans Jacob Frohberger, who introduced the Italian composer's innovations to Germany where, with Bach, contrapuntal organ music was to reach its highest perfection.

In Italy, the dominion of the impersonal polyphonic art that had flourished so remarkably in Renaissance Rome, was soon to be undermined by a revolutionary musical movement which aimed at the abolition of polyphony in favour of monodic song, expressing individual emotion. This movement—definitely anti-medieval in spirit—was fostered by a group of Florentine Intellectuals, known as the "Camerata."

CHAPTER IV

THE OPERA: FLORENCE AND MANTUA

THROUGHOUT Italy, music now underwent a remarkable metamorphosis. Although, at the close of the sixteenth century, Palestrina's art still represented the Italian ideal in music, the first decade of the new century saw its very antithesis, the Opera, firmly established. The pure, abstract beauty of ecclesiastical polyphony gave way suddenly, at the turn of the century, to a dramatic, emotional art, which gradually developed all the florid exuberance that characterized the *Barocco* period.

This change of style coincided with a complete transformation of the basic elements of the art. In the space of a few years, music—which had hitherto been grounded on the diatonic, modal system, whose texture had for centuries consisted of horizontal strands of independent melodies—now rapidly adopted the limited system of modern tonality, admitted the chromatic progressions it had formerly shunned, and abandoned polyphony in favour of homophony—a single melodic line, supported by vertical blocks of harmony. Thus, the whole musical fabric became altered; and, with a new idiom and new forms, music assumed an entirely different character.

This phenomenal transformation, which in retrospect seems so sudden, had been in process of evolution during the greater part of the sixteenth century, and was due to a fundamental change in the general cultural outlook. The Gothic spirit of the Middle Ages was dying out, and the Renaissance ideals, already surpreme in literature and painting, were slowly taking possession of music, the last artistic stronghold of medievalism.

Various tendencies and currents began to divert the art of music into new channels. One of the most important factors was the secularizing influence of the Renaissance movement which aimed at wresting from the Church her monopoly of the arts. Inherent in the new humanistic movement was the cult of individualism and the desire to give expression to the emotions of Man. Human sentiment was still practically unexploited in music, although the great sixteenth-century composers, Josquin des Près and Palestrina, had achieved sublime interpretations of religious emotion.

Medieval vocal polyphony, whose calm, impersonal accents had so perfectly expressed the ideal of divine worship, was incapable of satisfying the new aspirations which sought to render human passions in music. Such music could not interpret personal emotion, nor convey the romantic atmosphere of the new school of poets, of which Tasso was the greatest exponent. An individual style of musical expression was now needed. But, although the *canzone a liuto*, the solo song to lute accompaniment, had long been a popular type of folk-music, in the domain of art music, the solo had

been practically non-existent throughout the Flemish contrapuntal period.[1]

Instinctively, composers of secular vocal music developed a solo form, the evolution of which can be traced in the *madrigal*. Originally modelled on the contrapuntal church style, the *madrigal* began during the sixteenth century, to loosen its texture. From out the web of four, five, six or more closely interwoven melodies, the soprano part began little by little to emerge noticeably, whilst the other voices were subordinated so as to form a kind of background. Polyphony was gradually breaking up into monody and harmony: solo song and accompaniment.

The sudden adoption of monody, and of its harmonized form, homophony, in the last years of the sixteenth century, was due to the organized efforts of the "Camerata" of Florence. This small society of poets and amateur musicians, fervent apostles of the Renaissance ideals, began to meet regularly, from about the year 1580, at the house of the Florentine patrician, Giovanni de' Bardi, Count of Vernio. In various parts of Italy, throughout the Renaissance period, groups of literary men and artists had been in the habit of forming societies or Accademie; but none had such a far-reaching artistic influence as the Florentine Camerata.

Their chief propagandist was Vincenzo Galilei (father of the famous scientist). The other musical members of the group were: Bardi, del Cavaliere, Peri, Caccini and Corsi; whilst the literary element was represented by Rinuccini, Mei and Strozzi. These men, deeply imbued with classical culture, were definitely hostile to the art of counterpoint, which they stigmatized as "Gothic and barbarous." It was their ambition to invent a type of music which, like that of the ancient Greeks, would be closely moulded on poetic metre. Their theories on Greek music were not, however, based on practical knowledge, but on the allusions to music that occur in Homer, Plato, and other classical writers.

Even before this date, the cult of classical learning had aroused speculation as to the style of the music of antiquity. Under the influence of the literary revival, some early sixteenth-century German musicians, the chief amongst them being Tritonius and Senfl, had endeavoured to discover a type of music to fit the metre of Greek poetry; the most praiseworthy result was Tritonius' setting of the *Odes of Horace*. At the same time, theoretical authorities, like Glareon and Zarlino, had sanctioned the use of monody as an accompaniment to certain poetic texts which demanded an expressive treatment.

Galilei and his friends went further; they aimed at a complete reform of the art. Their tastes being more literary than musical, they judged that, since contemporary music fell short of the effects described by Greek authors, the fault must lie in the nature of polyphony. They consequently determined to invent a new solo type, halfway between speech and song, that would conform to their intellectual ideals.

Vincenzo Galilei expounded the theories and aims of the Camerata in the preface to his principal treatise: *A Dialogue on Ancient and Modern*

[1] Even when a polyphonic vocal composition was executed by lutes and viols and a single voice, the instrumental parts were contrapuntally of vital importance.

Music. He explained that their object was to help music to emerge from the dark regions in which she had long lain hidden, and to free her from the fetters in which the polyphonists had bound her, by re-discovering the monodic song of the Greeks. Evidently, the Camerata had an idyllic as well as a classical ideal in view, for Galilei expressed the hope that the new music might be akin to that which men first learnt from the song of the birds; as spontaneous as the melodies which the shepherds sang of old "among the woods and hills, to soothe their sorrows and relieve their fatigue."

The subsequent history of music is a striking example of the irony of fate. For the project which aimed at creating an art of such pristine simplicity led, in less than a century, to the florid, coloratura-laden operatic *aria*.

There was nothing very dramatic about the first examples of the new music composed by Galilei: a setting of Dante's *Lament of Ugolino*, which the composer sang to viol accompaniment at the Bardi Palace, and a similar arrangement of the *Lamentations of Jeremiah*. It was, however, inevitable that the compositions of the Florentine Camerata should be given a theatrical orientation, since several members of the group were officially responsible for the festival performances at the court of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, where the drama was very popular. In this wise, two distinct elements: the drama and the new monody, or *stile recitativo*, were brought together and soon became closely united. Since the literary element was the more highly developed at that period, its influence was at first supreme; and music was made subordinate to poetry.

The Italian music drama can, however, be traced to a more remote origin. The germ of opera is really to be found in the medieval liturgical plays or *Sacre Rappresentazioni*, in vogue from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries, of which the popular secular drama was an off-shoot. These ancient religious plays were almost entirely sung; liturgical melodies formed an important element, and *laude* were also introduced; whilst the declamatory recitative used in some of these dramas was derived from the ecclesiastical "tone di lezione" in which the Passion is chanted during Holy Week.

Other early types, which prepared the way for the Opera, were the *Laude drammatiche* and the Tuscan *Maggi*, which consisted of scenes and tableaux accompanied by descriptive songs, examples of which are still extant. All the basic elements of the Opera can be discerned in these old musical plays, sacred and secular. The original solo melodies were enriched with polyphonic parts in the fifteenth century; instrumental preludes and interludes were gradually introduced; whilst, on festive occasions, elaborate costumes and staging gave greater pomp to these performances which definitely foreshadow the "Melodramma," as the Opera was first called in Italy.

Plays, with and without music were performed at many of the Italian courts during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The classical taste of the period is evident from the frequent production of Latin tragedies, and from the mythological subjects chosen by contemporary Italian dramatists, favourite themes being the legends of *Orpheus* and *Daphne*.

The first landmark in music drama was the production of Poliziano's *Orfeo* at Mantua, in 1474, with incidental music by Germi, a composer whose name is otherwise unknown. Some twelve years later, the Mantuan court witnessed the production of another drama, *Dafne*, with music by a certain Gian Pietro della Viola. The music of these plays has not survived, but it was presumably in the prevalent polyphonic style.

The drama soon became a passion with the Renaissance princes, and splendidly-equipped theatres were built at Ferrara, Mantua, Milan, Venice and Rome. Mythological and pastoral subjects continued to inspire such writers as Ariosto, Machiavelli, Bibieno and Tasso; incidental dramatic music was composed by Alfonso della Viola of Ferrara; by the Venetians, Zarlino, Merulo and the two Gabrieli; and by Orazio Vecchi of Modena; whilst the magnificent scenic displays in which the Renaissance nobles delighted were designed by such great artists as: da Vinci, Brunelleschi, Raffaello and Bronzino.

For over a century, poets, musicians and painters collaborated in the development of a form which gave increasing pleasure to a small, cultured élite. The fact that the people were at first excluded from these performances, which were the monopoly of the patrician class, narrowed the sphere of Renaissance drama and influenced its character. It was only in the seventeenth century, when the "melodramma" reached a wider and more democratic public, and when music came to permeate the whole dramatic fabric, that the Italian Opera was created—that popular form, which long held the whole of Europe under its spell.

In the initial stages of the development of lyric drama, composers had some difficulty in discovering a suitable type of music. It was generally recognized that polyphony was both too intense in its musical interest and too remote from the poetic atmosphere. Many experiments were, no doubt, made by musicians at this time; yet the sole existing example of monodic music in a dramatic work is to be found in Alfonso della Viola's music to Beccari's "Il Sacrificio," which was performed at Ferrara in 1554. The solo in question occurs in the rôle of the priest, which was sung by the composer's brother who accompanied himself on the lyre; a four-part chorus alternating with his recitative. But this significant experiment does not seem to have found favour, for the idea was not further developed at the time.

A fresh impetus was needed to revolutionize dramatic music. Once more, the direct influence of poetry was to make itself felt. Just as, in the fourteenth century, Petrarch and Boccaccio had given music a new orientation; so, in the second half of the sixteenth century, Tasso's poetry helped to endow music with a romantic, lyrical quality. An enthusiastic music-lover, a friend of Palestrina, Marenzio and Carlo Gesualdo of Naples (for whom he wrote many *madrigals*), Tasso had definite ideas as to the type of music best suited to his verses. For the musical interpretation of his romantic pastoral poems, the poet naturally preferred to polyphony the use of a solo melody with subdued accompaniment that provided a melodious background for

his poetry without overwhelming it. The question of dramatic music was becoming of vital importance.

Opportunities for experimenting in new styles were offered by a series of brilliant festivals organized at Florence at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries, in connection with the marriages of members of the Medici family with the Gonzaga of Mantua and the Royal House of France. Several of the Camerata group were interested in these celebrations in an official capacity, Count Bardi and Emilio del Cavaliere having charge of the artistic management, whilst Peri and Caccini took part as professional singers.

The first of these dramatic performances given with musical "Intermedi," was a play of Bardi's acted in 1586, in honour of the marriage of Eleanora de' Medici with Vincenzo Gonzaga, who became Duke of Mantua the following year. Count Bardi himself composed one of the musical interludes, but most of the music was by Alessandro Striggio of Mantua.[1]

Much more spectacular were the celebrations held three years later when the Grand Duke of Tuscany married Christina of Lorraine, niece of Catherine de' Medici. Bardi was again responsible for the dramatic side of the festival which consisted of elaborately-staged mythological tableaux, the costumes, scenery and lighting being planned on a scale of unprecedented magnificence. These brilliant scenes, in which Marenzio, Caccini and Peri sang the principal rôles, at once won over the Florentine court to the principle of the lyric drama. So far, however, there was nothing revolutionary about the music. The songs composed for the "Intermedi" by del Cavaliere, Caccini and Marenzio were polyphonic in style, and did not illustrate the theories of the Camerata.

But, though they had not yet discovered their ideal type of dramatic music, the Florentine reformers were seriously intent on working out their ideas to a practical conclusion. In such a scheme, the libretto was obviously of great importance. The chief literary personage in this group was the poet Rinuccini, a disciple of Tasso, who provided most of the first opera composers with their libretti. Rinuccini exercised considerable influence on his musical colleagues and, being himself convinced of the superior importance of the poem, he encouraged the subordination of the music to the text.

The musicians concerned in the undertaking: Emilio del Cavaliere, Giacomo Peri and Giulio Caccini were faced with the problem which, since their day, has preoccupied many other opera composers, in particular, Gluck, Wagner and Debussy. They had, namely, to adapt their music to the metre of poetry and the inflexions of the voice, while suggesting the emotions of the various characters. In the prefaces to their principal works, each of the Camerata composers coined a phrase to describe the effect he sought to achieve. Del Cavaliere calls his music "recitar cantando"—a sung

[1] His name is known to-day chiefly for his *Cicalamento delle Donne al Bucato*, a little work in the *madrigal* style which realistically imitates the chattering of washer-women at their work.

declamation; Peri explains that he aims at making song imitate speech: "imitar col canto chi parla"; and Caccini uses the term "in armonia favellare" —harmonious speech. Their aims were, in fact, identical.

The Roman, del Cavaliere, was the first to produce works in the new manner, but his early attempts have disappeared. His famous mystery play, the *Rappresentazione di Anima a di Corpo*, shows, that in his happiest moments, he was able to achieve genuine truth of expression in recitative. But Peri, who further developed the new style, is usually regarded as the inventor of the type of dramatic music known as the "stile recitativo."

By 1594, he had completed his first work, a musical version of Rinuccini's *Dafne*, which was performed privately for the Camerata at the Palace of Count Corsi. (Corsi's house had become the headquarters of the movement after Bardi went to Rome as Maestro di Camera to Pope Clement VIII, in 1592, a year after the death of Vincenzo Galilei.) After this trial performance, Peri continued to work at the recitative of *Dafne* in order to achieve a more perfect union between the words and the music. The work was performed again, with great success, in 1597, in the presence of the Tuscan Court; the Camerata had justified themselves, and the music drama was henceforward an accepted reality.

It is a curious fact that the society which had planned such an important musical reform did not include any professional musicians in its ranks. The professionals were indeed indignant at the presumption of these Florentine amateurs, and at their contemptuous attitude towards the ancient art of polyphony which had inspired all the musical masterpieces of the past. To professional composers of that period it was inconceivable that serious music could be written in any other style.

The very year that Peri's *Dafne* was first performed, a musician trained in the classical tradition produced a work which purported to show the superior beauty and effectiveness of polyphony even as an adjunct to drama. This was *L'Anfiparnasso*, by Orazio Vecchi, a well-known writer of *madrigals*. The play was staged at the d'Este court at Modena with which the composer was connected. Unlike so many of these early dramatic works, the music of *L'Anfiparnasso* still exists. It is entirely vocal, consisting of a series of *madrigals*, in five or six parts, in which the principal episodes of the plot are concentrated. As regards action, the work hardly exceeded the scope of the *Cantata*. At the beginning of each scene, an actor announced the locality, the subject, and the characters that were to appear. These alone came on to the stage, while the remaining singers sang from behind the scenes, their voices forming a kind of accompaniment.

A prologue, in the form of a five-part *madrigal*, described the composer's intentions.

"Voi però non sdegnate
Questa Commedia nostra
Se non di ricca e vaga
Scena adorna. . . . .

"Do not despise our Comedy
because it is not adorned
by beautiful, elaborate scenery.

". . . . ma voi sappiat'intanto, Che questo di cui parlo Spettacolosi mira con lamente Dov'entra per l'orecchie E non per gli occhi.	As you know, this spectacle is meant to appeal to the mind to which it penetrates through the ear, not through the eye.
Però silenzio fate, E'n vece di vedere, hora ascoltate."	Therefore, keep silence; instead of watching, listen."

Such unrealistic treatment obviously offered little opportunity for characterization or dramatic effect. Yet, in spite of its limitations, this work had a certain influence; for it drew attention to the effectiveness of the polyphonic part-song, neglected by the Florentines. In addition, the popular nature of the subject—which introduced Pantalone, Francatrippa and other well-known characters of the Italian "Commedia dell'Arte"—produced a healthy reaction against the pompousness of the classical drama.

In spite of the criticisms of the professional musicians, Peri and Caccini continued to develop their dramatic recitative. The festivities organized at the Tuscan court in honour of the marriage of Maria de' Medici to Henry the Fourth of France, in 1600, gave Peri an opportunity of staging a new work, *Euridice*. This was the first opera produced in public, and the earliest of these works of which the music has survived. The remarkable triumph it achieved was probably due to the fact that the rôle of Orfeo was taken by the composer who was famed for his beautiful and expressive voice. The instruments played a more important part in this opera. The "orchestra" consisted of a chitarrone, a theorbo, a viola da gamba, three flutes, and a clavicembalo which Corsi played behind the scenes.

Caccini's opera to the same text, which was performed soon after, produced less effect, his recitative lacking the emotional quality that distinguished Peri's. The most significant characteristic of Caccini's music is his use of long vocalises which already herald the subsequent abuse of coloratura and the glorification of vocal virtuosity.

Amongst the important guests who assisted at the epoch-making performance of Peri's *Euridice* was Vincenzo Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua, who probably brought with him in his suite Claudio Monteverdi of Cremona, singer, viola player and *madrigal* composer. In his youth, Monteverdi had studied at Cremona with Marcantonio Ingegneri, who had introduced him to the music of de Rore and the other sixteenth-century Venetian composers. The young musician had adopted their expressive style, their chromatic colouring and independent instrumental treatment.

Monteverdi, now thirty-two years old, had already published several books of *madrigals* which had aroused criticism because of his daring experiments in tonality,[1] modulation and harmony, new elements which were soon to revolutionize the medieval musical system.

[1] Tonality was a burning question at this time. The *madrigals* of Willaert, de Rore, Arcadelt, Marenzio and Palestrina, had been written in the church modes. But the growing feeling for harmony led to the neglect of those modes which did not lend themselves

The Florentine experiments in lyric drama naturally aroused the interest and rivalry of the Gonzaga who, more than a century earlier, had fostered the first attempts to unite dramatic poetry and music. Duke Vincenzo, having in his employment a number of excellent singers and a composer of such enterprise and dramatic instinct as Monteverdi, decided to cultivate the "Melodramma" at Mantua. The result was that in 1607, the Mantuan "Accademia degli Invaghiti" produced Monteverdi's first opera, a musical version of Rinuccini's *Orfeo*.

The ambition of the Gonzaga to emulate the Tuscan court, by enabling Monteverdi to show his skill in the new form, incidentally gave the lyric drama a new orientation. For Monteverdi did not, like the Florentines, content himself with making his recitative follow the inflexions of the voice, or interpret the words of the poem; he aimed at the direct expression of human passion and pathos. Monteverdi achieved his purpose partly by the use of unprepared dissonances and unusual harmonies; another revolutionary novelty was the melodic quality of his recitative, which paved the way for the later operatic *aria*.

The skilful madrigalist did not fail to provide the nymphs, shepherds and demons with choruses. His orchestra, which utilized to the full the capacity of the Renaissance instruments, included the cembalo, various types of viols, the new violins, the harp, the chitarrone, organs, trombones, trumpets, horns and flutes. He subdivided the instruments into groups to achieve special effects in different scenes; but all joined together in the opening *Toccata* and the final *Symphony*. An important innovation was the introduction of the violin which Monteverdi was henceforward to use in place of the viol, thus laying the foundations of the modern orchestra.

A similar tendency to heighten the musical interest, especially as regards the use of choruses, is to be noticed in Da Gagliano's *Dafne*, produced at Mantua the following year. The opera was already abandoning the over-literary tendency it had inherited from the Camerata. In his second opera, *Arianna*, Monteverdi achieved a still more direct interpretation of emotion. The only fragment that has come down to us, the famous Lament, *Lasciatemi morir*, has an intense poignancy which is all the more effective for its extreme simplicity. In this lament, the composer is said to have expressed his grief for the loss of his wife, who had died a few months previously.

Monteverdi had dedicated his *Orfeo* to the Duke of Mantua's heir, Francesco Gonzaga. Nevertheless, no sooner did this prince succeed his father in 1612, than he dismissed the composer. A few years later, the Gonzaga tried to induce him to return, but in vain, Monteverdi was tired of the unkept promises of this family who, as he wrote, "always granted him future favours, never those due in the present."

o harmonic treatment. The result was that, of the six modes in general use up to the end of the sixteenth century, four fell into disuse in the early seventeenth century, when musicians limited themselves to the Ionian and Aeolian modes (corresponding to our major and minor scales), which admit of a free play of harmonic progressions and modulations.

A year later, Monteverdi was appointed Choir Director of San Marco, Venice. There he found an environment peculiarly suited to his temperament; and he so identified himself with the city as to sign himself: Claudio Monteverdi, Veneziano. Until his death thirty years later, he remained the outstanding musical personality of Venice which he made famous as the first great centre of Opera.

With the departure of Monteverdi, Mantua's importance began to wane. Soon Florence, in its turn, ceased to have any noteworthy influence on musical development. The heyday of the Renaissance courts was over. Music was henceforward to move on a bigger scale. Its future history is chiefly connected with three great towns: Venice, Rome and Naples; in all of which the favourite form was now the Opera, and its religious counterpart, the Oratorio.

CHAPTER V

OPERA AND ORATORIO IN VENICE

The year before Monteverdi's arrival in Venice, Giovanni Gabrieli died (1612); and with him, as with Palestrina in Rome, an epoch ended. There was no further development of the tradition and style of the Gabrieli; for the Symphonic types they had evolved were immediately superseded by the "Melodramma," which captured the public taste with extraordinary rapidity in the early seventeenth century.

In spite of the sudden vogue for profane music, most of the principal composers were still church musicians; Monteverdi and his disciples and successors: Cavalli, Legrenzi and Lotti, were cantors, organists or choir-directors at San Marco, and wrote many Masses and *motets* for the Basilica. But their most important works were operas, and their sacred music shows signs of their preoccupation with this secular form. Whilst the vocal "*a cappella*" music of the Venetian School remained at first strictly polyphonic in style, the operatic influence was noticeable in the increased use of instruments. In addition to the two organs of the Basilica, Monteverdi had an orchestra of twenty-five instruments which included the violin, viola, lute, horn and trumpet.

Like the previous masters of the Grand Ducal choir, Monteverdi also composed or directed the semi-ecclesiastical music performed for such State festivals as the Doge's symbolic marriage to the Adriatic and the anniversary of Lepanto. But his fame rests chiefly on his developments in the domain of lyric drama.

In Venice, as in other parts of Italy, the theatres were originally private, the audience, invited guests. So popular did the opera become during the course of the seventeenth century, that all the principal patrician families built their own theatres, and the city soon possessed as many as eighteen. Monteverdi's early operas were frequently performed for these select audiences and he wrote four new works in Venice which show an increasing capacity for dramatic expression. For a festival at the Mocenigo Palace, he set to music a scene from Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered*—the battle between Tancred and Clorinda. To convey the impression of din and turmoil, Monteverdi invented the violin *tremolo*, used for the first time in the execution of this work. His Opera *Prosperina Rapita* was written a few years later for the marriage of a member of the Mocenigo family. Then suddenly, all social life in Venice was once more brought to a standstill by a terrible outbreak of the plague. One of the victims was Monteverdi's son, Francesco, a cantor in the San Marco choir. The following year, the composer became a priest.

Local conditions influenced to some extent the style of the Venetian opera. Although the nobles spent large sums of money on their theatres, they could not afford the lavish expenditure of the courts of Florence and Mantua. In the interests of economy, both the chorus and the orchestra had to be limited in numbers. Monteverdi accepted these restrictions. He abandoned the big orchestra which had been a feature of his first works; and, modifying his original plan, centred the interest in the solos, to which he gave a more expressive and melodious character, thus tending towards the *recitativo arioso* and the *aria*.

Soon the fame of Monteverdi's operas gave Venice a fresh reputation as a centre of musical developments; interest in his innovations spread to Germany and Austria. Amongst the German musicians who had closely followed the transformation of the musical art was Schütz, who, ever since his student days with Giovanni Gabrieli, had regarded Venice as the capital of the musical world. Being anxious to study Monteverdi's developments and bring his technique up to date, Schütz returned to Venice in 1628. The influence of Monteverdi's style was evident in his subsequent work. His opera *Dafne* (now lost) was the first composition in this form by a non-Italian musician and earned for Schütz the title of "Father of the German Opera."

An event which gave a considerable impetus to opera and eventually affected its very nature, was the opening of the theatres to the general public. Venice was the first town to take this step. The credit was however due to the enterprise of two Roman musicians, Manelli and Ferrari, who took over the San Cassiano Theatre in 1637, and inaugurated it as a public Opera House with the production of Manelli's *Andromeda*. The San Moise Theatre opened its doors to the public two years later for a performance of Monteverdi's *Arianna*. Gradually other theatres followed suit until, during the season, as many as eight theatres were open at a time. This not only gave local composers wonderful opportunities for producing new works but attracted musicians from other towns, so that Venice soon became regarded as the home of opera.

The nobles still reserved their private boxes in the theatres, whilst the citizens filled the remainder of the house; some parts were free, especially to that privileged class, the gondoliers. The democratic tastes of the new type of audience had to be considered, since they became the chief financial supporters of opera. Certain modifications resulted. Thus, historical subjects tended to replace the mythological and pastoral legends which had hitherto formed the favourite plots. A more realistic note soon crept in; comic scenes were frequently introduced, and these were very effectively treated by Monteverdi.

Like Haydn and Verdi, who composed some of their best music in their old age, Monteverdi, at the age of seventy-five—a year before his death—wrote his masterpiece, *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* (1642). This work shows how skilfully he had adapted himself to the Venetian conditions. Instead of the choruses that had diversified his earlier works, he used concerted

vocal numbers; whilst the clavicembalo, with its "basso continuo"[1] accompaniment, replaced many orchestral instruments. In this last opera, Monteverdi interpreted the most varied emotions and produced very dramatic effects with extremely simple means. The work represents such an advance in lyric drama that, since its re-discovery and re-production by Vincent d'Indy, in 1888—after two centuries of oblivion—*L'Incoronazione di Poppea* has come to be regarded as the foundation stone of Italian Opera.

Monteverdi's pupil, Cavalli, also won a great reputation in Venice as opera composer. His principal works, *Giasone*, and *Didone*, had all the verve and rhythmic vitality that characterized the music of the Venetians, who did not share the Florentine cult of antiquity, but delighted in colour and movement. Following in the footsteps of Monteverdi, Cavalli compensated himself for the lack of a big chorus and orchestra by concentrating on the vocal solos. He showed a marked tendency to abandon the dry recitative for the melodic *aria*, and was one of the first to borrow elements from the popular *canzone*. Music was fast emancipating itself from the dominion of poetry, and was about to become the predominant element in opera.

Among the composers from other towns who were attracted to Venice as the chief centre of opera, was the Florentine, Marcantonio Cesti, who later went to Rome as Papal cantor. He achieved great popularity in Venice. His operatic style, though modelled largely on that of Monteverdi and Cavalli, shows the influence of sacred music, especially of the Roman *Cantata*—in which he was a disciple of Carissimi; a fact which doubtless accounts for a certain formality of design, noticeable in Cesti's operas.

The lyric drama continued to flourish in Venice under Legrenzi and his pupils Lotti and Caldara. All three were connected with the Basilica of San Marco, where the instrumental element continued to grow in importance. Legrenzi increased the orchestra to thirty-four instruments, which were organized on the basis of a String Quintet and Wind, like the future Symphonic orchestra: ecclesiastical music had wandered far from the austere spirit of the medieval polyphonic masters.

Venetian Opera, which had reached its zenith with Monteverdi and had maintained a high level with Cavalli and Cesti, was already degenerating by the end of the seventeenth century. Its decay was chiefly due to the reign of the virtuoso whose vocal gymnastics had become the principal feature of interest for the public. The singers, who had by this time developed a remarkable technical skill, vied with each other in the execution of the runs, trills and other florid coloratura passages that soon completely disfigured the melodic line of the *aria*. Yet, so great was the prestige of these popular favourites, that composers found themselves obliged to pander to their wishes by providing them with the type of music best calculated to show off their technique.

The absurd pretensions of the principal vocalists, around whom the entire

[1] This form of accompaniment, improvised according to a figured bass, had already been used by sixteenth century Venetian organists. It was destined to become an important element in the early opera and oratorio orchestra.

operatic world now revolved, drew a biting satire from the pen of Benedetto Marcello, a pupil of Lotti. Diplomat, writer and musician, Marcello who, like the Gabrieli, belonged to a noble Venetian family, was one of the few Venetian musicians of his day who devoted themselves to sacred music. His most important compositions were his settings of the first fifty Psalms,[1] and he wrote both the words and music of several *cantatas* and *oratorios*.

Marcello's literary reputation rests chiefly on his Satire on Venetian Opera which has been recently reprinted. Several of the points he deals with are as pertinent to-day as they were in 1720; as, for instance, the choice of suitable subjects, the legitimacy of employing elaborate machinery and of introducing supernatural or fantastic elements.

In this work, entitled *Il Teatro alla Moda*, or *A Safe and Easy Method of Composing and Executing the Italian Musical Opera in the Modern Manner*, Marcello attacks in turn each category of persons concerned in the production of opera. The poet is strongly advised to know nothing about metre or versification. He is recommended to say that he had studied mathematics, painting, medicine or law, but that his genius had drawn him irresistibly to poetry. When planning the libretto, his first care should be to find out how many changes of scene the stage manager intends to introduce and what machinery will be used. The poet should then consult the scene-shifters as to the length of the dialogues, ariettas, etc., so as to leave ample time to prepare the set. He need not trouble to inquire about the talent of the actors, but he should make sure that the manager has provided himself with a good bear, a good lion, a good nightingale, good arrows and thunder and lightning.

Before writing a line of the music, the composer is advised to call on all the principal singers in the caste and express his willingness to enhance their talents by providing them with suitable music. The *arias* should be alternately gay and sad, without any regard for the sense of the words; and care must be taken to assign the best *arias* to the Prima Donna. At the cadenzas, the conductor is warned to make all the instruments cease playing, so as to allow the soloist to keep on the trills and coloratura passages for as long as he or she likes. Violins, playing in unison with the singer, and without any accompanying bass, should support the principal virtuoso, to keep him in tune. Emphasizing the lack of education of most singers at that time, the satirist remarks that they need not know how to read or write, nor is it necessary for them to have any knowledge of solfeggio or theory. Even the Prima Donna's mother, the copyist and the ticket-office clerk, come in for amusing but scathing criticism.

In spite of Marcello's strictures, the opera continued to be highly popular in Venice, as is evident from the remarkable number of new works produced there during the eighteenth century. Lotti and Caldara still pleased the public and amongst the new Venetian favourites were: Gasparini, the

[1] An idea, original for that period, was the introduction, into his setting of the Eighteenth Psalm, of a Greek hymn to Demeter (regarded by most modern authorities, however, as of doubtful authenticity).

Pollarolo, Ruggeri, Vivaldi—more famous as a violinist—and Alessandro Scarlatti. The last named was then engaged in establishing a school of opera in Naples which was to make that city famous in musical history. Another popular opera composer in eighteenth-century Venice was Scarlatti's German pupil, Hasse, the first of the many German opera composers who devoted themselves to Italian opera. The operas of "il caro Sassone," as Hasse was called, were appreciated all over Italy; but the town he most frequented was Venice, where he met his wife, the famous singer, Faustina Bordone.

One of the last Venetian composers of note was Galuppi whose position as choir-master at San Marco did not hinder him from being chiefly famous as a composer of "Opera Buffa" (Comic Opera). His reputation spread as far as Russia, and Catherine the Great, bent on the establishment of opera at her court, invited him to St. Petersburg. The Venetian Senate gave Galuppi leave of absence for three years, on condition that he wrote a new Christmas Mass for the Basilica every year.

Whereas San Marco had been the scene of the earliest musical developments in Venice; and the creation of opera had made the theatres the centre of attraction during the seventeenth century; the last important musical manifestations in Venice are connected with four local Ospedali or Orphanages, in each of which from sixty to eighty girls were trained in music, with such success that the best vocal and instrumental music in eighteenth-century Venice was to be heard in these "Conservatoires."

The two oldest Ospedali: the Pietà—a foundling hospital—and the Mendicanti—originally a Leper hospital—had been in existence since the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; whilst the Incurabili and the Ospedaletto of SS. John and Paul, were sixteenth-century foundations. The original intention of the directors had been to give any musically-gifted children in the orphanages connected with these institutions an opportunity of learning the art as a means of livelihood. But, so general was the musical talent of these Venetian children, that all four orphanages developed in time into regular schools of music. By the end of the seventeenth century, the Ospedali churches were famous for the singing of the pupils; and noted musicians like Legrenzi, Lotti, Marcello, Hasse, Porpora, Scarlatti and Galuppi, were glad to accept posts as masters and directors of schools which possessed such unrivalled choral and instrumental material.

The *oratorios* performed by the pupils on great feast days attracted all the notabilities of Venice; special galleries were reserved for State Officials and foreign Ambassadors; Emperors, Kings, and a Pope (Pius IV) assisted at these famous productions. Celebrated foreigners who came to Venice during the eighteenth century did not fail to visit the Ospedali; amongst the music-loving travellers who left accounts of their impressions were: de Brosses, the President of the Dijon Parliament; Dr. Burney, Rousseau and Goethe.

De Brosses, arriving in Venice in 1739, on a Bucentaur (the same type of boat that Isabella d'Este used to travel by two hundred and fifty

years earlier), was delighted with the beauty of the city which he ranked as the second town in the world—Paris being the first. He was amazed at the amount of music to be heard in Venice. "There is hardly an evening," he remarked, "when there is not an *accademia* (a concert). The passion of this nation for the art cannot be conceived." Above all, the music at the Ospedali was in his opinion "beyond all praise." He thought the girls' voices "adorable," and the instrumental music, "perfect"; and was particularly struck by the bowing of the principal violinists at the Pietà, declaring he had never before heard such playing.

The versatility of these girl musicians astonished de Brosses. "They play the violin, flute, organ, hautboy, violoncello, bassoon . . . in fact, no instrument is big enough to frighten them. . . . Nothing can be more delightful than to see a pretty young novice,[1] dressed in white, with a spray of pomegranate blossom behind her ear, conducting an orchestra." He could not say enough about the technique, and style of the violin playing, but in his opinion, none of the compositions he heard were equal to the *sonatas* of his compatriot, Leclair.

De Brosses had a violent altercation with the German composer, Hasse, over the relative merits of French and Italian music; Hasse maintaining that Italian was the only language suitable for singing, and that music could not be written to any other. "If his wife, Faustina, had not come between us," wrote de Brosses, "he would have seized me with a double-crotchet and battered me with sharps." ("Il m'alloit harper avec une double-croche et m'accabler de diésis".)

Thirty years later, Dr. Burney was, if possible, still more enthusiastic over the music he heard in Venice. Even the street musicians, whom the Venetians scarcely noticed, sang and played so well, the Englishman declared, that they would have attracted attention and applause anywhere else.

Venice offered "so many interesting things for a music lover" that Burney found it hard to choose. He assisted at performances at all four Conservatoires and was particularly delighted with the choir of the "Incurabili," directed by Galuppi, who had just returned from Russia. The principal singers had voices of beautiful quality and remarkable compass. According to Burney, they were "real nightingales, and sang difficult passages with the ease of birds." On the other hand, at the Mendicanti and the Pietà, he was more impressed by the orchestras. It is curious to find Burney remarking that "the art of music-printing seems to be entirely lost" in Venice, where it had first flourished. He noticed, in fact, that throughout Italy, the music was all in manuscript form.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, Goethe too, visited the Venetian Ospedali. In his *Italian Journey*, he gives an account of an *oratorio* he heard at the "Mendicanti" which, at that period (1784), was the most famous of the Conservatoires. "The church was thronged," wrote Goethe, "the music was very fine, the voices glorious. A contralto sang the part of

[1] The Conservatoire pupils were divided into two categories: the younger students being known as *novizie*, the advanced scholars as *provette*.

Saul, the principal rôle in the *oratorio*. I never imagined such a voice could exist."

But the days of these institutions were numbered. Owing to lack of funds or to maladministration, all four were closed before the end of the eighteenth century. Soon afterwards, the Venetian Republic came to an end. And, with her independence, Venice lost the artistic inspiration that had given birth to those characteristic forms which are such important landmarks on the road of musical evolution.

CHAPTER VI

OPERA AND ORATORIO IN ROME

WHILST Venice narrowed its musical horizon almost exclusively to the cultivation of opera, Rome retained a wider outlook and remained throughout the seventeenth century the chief centre of musical and general culture, from which Italian influence spread all over Europe. During the first half of the century, in particular, Rome was instrumental in restraining the spirit of mundanity that was taking possession of music; for there the old traditions had not yet lost their force. Palestrina was still the model in sacred vocal music, and Frescobaldi, as organist of St. Peter's, was raising instrumental music to a higher artistic plane. In addition, the interest taken by several Popes and many Cardinals and Roman Princes in the new developments in opera, *oratorio* and *cantata*, encouraged the cultivation of these forms by a group of Roman composers whose influence was of considerable importance.

Although Florence had initiated the movement that led to the creation of opera, it was Rome that had actually been the scene of the first public production of a music drama; for the performance of Emilio del Cavaliere's *Rappresentazione di Anima e di Corpo* at the Roman Oratory of Santa Maria in Vallicella, in 1600, had anticipated the production of Peri's *Euridice* at Florence by some ten months. Del Cavaliere had died soon afterwards; but meanwhile the dramatic innovations of the Camerata had begun to interest other Roman musicians. The first to try his hand at a secular musical play was the organist of Santa Maria Maggiore, Paolo Quagliati. Lacking a theatre in which to produce his work, Quagliati had the originality to organize a travelling theatre such as the dramatist, Thespe, used in ancient Greece—an idea which modern Italy has successfully developed on a huge scale with the "Carro di Tespi."

Five masked actors, carrying their movable stage on a cart drawn by oxen, gave performances of Quagliati's *Carro di Fedeltà d'Amore* (The Cart of Faithful Love) in various parts of the city of Rome during the last days of the Carnival of 1606. They were followed by a crowd of citizens, attracted by the novelty of the entertainment. Quagliati introduced variety into the musical play; for, whilst he adopted the Florentine recitative for solos, he interspersed his little work with part-songs and choruses.

From the beginning, the Roman musicians, like those of Venice, showed no intention of abandoning the rich heritage of the polyphonic masters and limiting themselves to monodic recitative. *Arias*, duets, choruses and instrumental *ritornelli* were important features also in the next Roman opera: Stefano Landi's *Morte d'Orfeo*, which reached a more exalted public,

for it was produced at the Pontifical court in 1619, before the Borghese Pope, Paul V.

The courts of the Cardinals now became important factors in musical development. One of the most active patrons of the art was Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini, who employed in turn as his music directors such famous men as Palestrina, Marenzio and Frescobaldi. Amongst the musicians in his household at this period was Domenico Mazzocchi. This composer and his brother, Vergilio (choir-master at the Lateran, and later at St. Peter's), were to become noted figures in the short-lived, but important, Roman School of Opera. In 1626, Domenico Mazzocchi wrote his first opera, *La Catena d'Adone* (The Chain of Adonis) which, in addition to its musical qualities, had a breadth and a grandeur of style that recommended it to the Florentine Prince Barberini and his brothers, who were the chief patrons of the drama in Rome. The brilliant operatic developments that took place there during the following twenty years were due to the veritable passion for the theatre of the three Barberini brothers. As nephews of the reigning Pope, Urban VIII, they held positions of importance in Rome; two were cardinals, the third, Prefect of the city. Their great wealth enabled them to stage their productions without any regard for expense; and, since the vast salons of the Barberini Palace were not spacious enough for their elaborate schemes, they built a theatre which accommodated three thousand guests. Their artistic director was the famous sculptor and architect, Bernini; and enormous sums were spent on machinery, settings and costumes.

As in Florence, so also in Rome, a high literary standard made the libretto an important element. The favourite dramatist of seventeeth-century Rome was Monsignor Rospigliosi—later to become Pope Clement IX—who, in addition to being a poet, was a keen lover of music. He wrote the libretti for most of the operas the Barberini produced; and his works showed a strong sense of the dramatic and a talent for character-drawing, especially in the creation of peasant types.

The importance given to the scenic and literary elements in the Barberini theatre put the composers at a disadvantage: the music was apt to be overshadowed by Bernini's spectacular settings and Rospigliosi's dramas. Yet, some interesting operatic developments are to the credit of Monteverdi's Roman contemporaries, the most noteworthy of whom were: Stefano Landi, Michelangelo Rossi, the two Mazzocchi, Marco Marazzoli of Parma, Abbatini and Luigi Rossi. Like the Venetian Opera composers, most of these men were church musicians, some being Papal cantors, other choir-masters at the principal Basilicas. The outstanding characteristic of the style of opera they evolved was a strong sense of form which led them to plan their musical material in a logical manner; and some of their vocal and instrumental innovations became permanent features of Italian Opera.

The Barberini theatre was inaugurated in 1632 with *Sant 'Alessio*, a sacred music drama by Rospigliosi and Landi. The chief musical value of the work lies in the fact that the instrumental prelude to Act II is the first

example of what was to be known later as the "Italian Overture."[1] For this little *sinfonia* is in three sections, the first and the last of which are *allegros*, the middle section being an *adagio*. Another original touch is the introduction of comic episodes, here used for the first time in "Melodramma."

The Barberini continued to produce Roman operas of diverse types and varying merits. Some of Rospigliosi's plots were borrowed from Tasso, as was the case with his romantic play *Erminia sul Giordano*, which was set to music by a pupil of Frescobaldi, Michelangelo Rossi. The first edition of this opera contains as a foreword, a spectator's account of the magnificence of the production, in which the most elaborate scenic apparatus was used. The opening scene showed a grotto, through which flowed the river Jordan, with the inevitable Naiads disporting themselves on its banks.

An incident, which was probably unusual even at this period, occurred in the last scene, when the composer himself made his appearance, in time to receive the applause of the audience, in the character of Apollo, seated on a cloud, and attended by a group of beautiful Zephyrs. "And who was Apollo?" asks the writer of the preface, rhetorically. "Signor Michelangelo Rossi, the composer of the opera, who drew from his violin such delightful harmonies as to prove his absolute dominion and lordship over the Muses."

An important new feature for which the Barberini Opera was responsible was the half-sung, half-spoken type of dialogue, to be known as *recitativo secco*, which was used for the first time in Rospigliosi's *Chi soffre speri* (Let the sufferer hope). The composers, Vergilio Mazzocchi and Marco Marazzoli, heightened the dramatic atmosphere of the opera by means of an original chorus, descriptive of a fair scene, which realistically imitated the cries of the Hucksters. Milton was present in 1639, at a performance of this opera, which was given, the poet says, "with true Roman magnificence." He was greatly flattered by the reception accorded him by Cardinal Francesco Barberini, to whom he had been introduced by Lucas Holstenius, Keeper of the Vatican Library. Milton wrote to the latter: "He himself (the Cardinal) stood at the door to receive me, sought me out in that great crowd and pressed me to enter with every mark of honour."

From the point of view of musical value, however, the best of these Roman works was the pastoral opera, *La Galatea;* of which both libretto and music were by Loreto Vittori, a famous member of the Pontifical Choir.

One of the last works written for the Barberini Theatre at this period was *The Enchanted Palace* (Il Palazzo Incantato), by the Neapolitan, Luigi Rossi, whose ornamental *recitativo arioso* foretells the style of the future Neapolitan School. Roman opera suffered a sudden eclipse when the Barberini Theatre was closed in 1664, under sensational circumstances.

The arrogance and ostentation of the Florentine Barberini had long

[1] This type of overture, the invention of which is usually attributed to Alessandro Scarlatti, differs from the "French" overture, which consists of two slow movements with a quick section in the middle.

offended the Roman patricians. For some years, rumours had circulated to the effect that the Barberini had taken advantage of their position to use public money for their private expenditure. They had already been challenged to answer this charge during the last year of the reign of their uncle, Pope Urban VIII. When he died, in 1644, and was succeeded by Innocent X, who belonged to a hostile party, the Barberini fled to France. There they received such vigorous support from their friend, Mazarin, that the French government became involved in the quarrel. The result was that their enemies found it advisable to agree to a reconciliation and the Barberini returned to Rome.

During the nine years' sojourn of the Barberini in France, Mazarin brought several of their composers and singers to Paris, with a view to establishing the Italian Opera there. Meanwhile, in Rome, the lyric drama languished. An influential clerical group had been hostile to it from the beginning; and, at intervals during the seventeenth century, several popes had shown their disapproval of operatic performances, when they had not actually prohibited them.

The absence of the Barberini gave, indirectly, an impetus to such semi-dramatic forms of music as the *cantata da camera* and the *oratorio*; and many opera composers now turned their attention to these types. The lyrical *cantata*—which, like the opera was an offshoot of the *madrigal*—though at first very popular, had a comparatively short vogue. Its great defect was its monotony, resulting from the symmetrical manner in which the *recitatives* and *arias* were arranged. The *cantata* became neglected when composers began to realize the infinitely greater possibilities of instrumental music.

The more dramatic *oratorio*, on the other hand, was destined to develop side by side with the opera, until Handel made it a great form in the mid-eighteenth century. But, long before Handel's day, Italy was slowly shaping the *oratorio*, and evolving a definite form out of St. Philip Neri's simple musical services.

The two Roman *oratories* where these performances had first been held remained the principal centres of development during the seventeenth century. At Santa Maria in Vallicella, the oratorian poet Padre Manni, and his musical confrères, Padri Martini, Soto, Isorelli and Rosini, enriched the original repertoire with new sacred songs in a simple popular style. Music of a higher professional standard was provided by Gian Francesco Anerio, whose "Teatro armonico spirituale di Madrigale"—a series of dialogues and part-songs in the *madrigal* style—was written for Santa Maria in Vallicella. There also, in 1631, the opera composer, Domenico Mazzocchi, produced his sacred drama, *Querimonia*, whose expressive recitative is akin to that of the future *oratorio*.

But the most noteworthy of all the Italians who helped to develop this form was Giacomo Carissimi. Born near Rome, in the first years of the seventeenth century, he began his career, like so many musicians of that time, as a choir boy. Later, he became organist at the Tivoli Cathedral, his

director being Manelli,[1] a composer of operas and *cantatas*. At the age of twenty-five, Carissimi went to Rome as choir-master of the Jesuit Church of Sant' Apollinare, attached to the German college—a post which he filled till his death forty-five years later. During this long period, Carissimi, "a tall, thin man, inclined to melancholy," according to the laconic description of his contemporary, Pitoni, kept aloof from the secular forms that had captured the fancy of even the most serious church composers, and devoted all his talents to sacred music. The solemn, ascetic style of his *cantatas* and *oratorios* seems to embody a protest against the profane spirit that had invaded the domain of ecclesiastical music: for already the accompanied solo song was superseding polyphony in the Roman churches.

Carissimi was one of the musicians regularly engaged at the chapel of the Confraternity of the Crucifix of San Marcello where, ever since 1568, performances of sacred music had been held during Lent. Many celebrated Roman composers in turn had supplied *motets* for these occasions. The austere polyphony of Palestrina and Orlando di Lasso had been succeeded by the less severe style of Marenzio, Quagliati and Landi. Gradually the music became more elaborate. In addition to the Latin *motets*, which sometimes served as choruses and sometimes took the dialogue form, there were instrumental interludes; and a soloist, called the narrator or "Historicus," recited Bible stories in a kind of Gregorian chant. These elements, welded together, formed the chief material of the sixteen *oratorios* Carissimi wrote for the Oratory of the Crucifix of San Marcello, and which he produced in that little chapel—a gem of Renaissance architecture—during the mid-seventeenth century. In *Jephthe*, the finest of these works, the tragic emotion of the title rôle is rendered with remarkable truth of expression. Carissimi excelled in imparting to each subject its appropriate atmosphere, and he was able to express pathos and dramatic feeling while avoiding any suggestion of the theatrical.

The fame Carissimi acquired through these works brought him many pupils: compatriots, like Cesti, Alessandro Scarlatti, Steffani; as well as foreigners, the most celebrated of whom were: the Austrian, Johann Kaspar von Kerll (who had originally come to Rome to study the organ with Frescobaldi), Johann Philipp von Krieger of Nuremberg, and the French composer, Charpentier. Carissimi published none of his *oratorios* himself. If they are still in existence to-day, it is thanks to the fact that his pupils produced them in France and Germany, and that their MS copies were preserved in various libraries. Carissimi's music found great favour in Paris, where Charpentier made it known. And it is to a contemporary French musician, André Maugars, that we owe the only existing account of the performance of an *oratorio* at the Chapel of the Crucifix of San Marcello, in 1639. Maugars does not mention the name of the composer, but it is generally accepted that the work described was by Carissimi, who had then

[1] This was the Manelli who, in conjunction with Ferrari, opened the first public Opera House in Venice.

been ten years established in Rome and was the chief musician connected with this oratory.

"There is another type of music," wrote Maugars, "which is quite unknown in France . . . it is called *stile recitativo*. The best I heard was at the Oratory of San Marcello, where there is a Confraternity of the Brothers of the Holy Crucifix, composed of all the principal Roman patricians. They are naturally in a position to secure the finest talent in Italy; indeed, all the best musicians pride themselves on appearing there. This admirable, this delightful music, is performed only on the Fridays in Lent from three to six o'clock. The church, which is not nearly so big as the Sainte Chapelle in Paris, has a spacious tribune at the back with a medium-sized organ, very soft in tone and suitable for accompanying voices. On either side of the chapel are two other small galleries, and there the best instrumentalists are placed . . . .

"The vocalists sing a story from the Old Testament, arranged in the form of a sacred play, based on such subjects as Suzanna, Judith and Holofernes, or David and Goliath. Each singer represents a character in the story, and they bring out the meaning of the words most admirably . . . I cannot praise this recitative music too highly; one must have heard it in this environment to be able to judge of its excellence."

The *oratorio* form was also cultivated by Pasquini, Foggia, Cesti, Luigi Rossi, and most of the musicians who lived in Rome in the second half of the seventeenth century; but Carissimi towers above them all as the greatest composer of sacred vocal music of his day.

On the return of the Barberini to Rome in 1653, their theatre was reopened with a new opera, Rospigliosi's *Dal male al bene* (From evil comes good), set to music by Marazzoli with the collaboration of Abbatini, the choir-master of Santa Maria Maggiore. Here again, the Roman composers introduced fresh material in the shape of concerted vocal finales to the various acts. These concerted *finale* were to be characteristic features of the comic opera now developing and which was soon to rival the serious opera.

The Barberini gave one last magnificent production in honour of Queen Christina of Sweden, who visited Rome in 1658; after which their theatre was closed for good. Roman society continued to be entertained by occasional dramas and operas at the private theatres of the Bernini, Corsini, Colonna and Rospigliosi families; but the Roman School of Opera, deprived of the support of the Barberini, soon came to an end, and Venetian operas became the fashion in Rome.

Some of Cavalli's works had already been privately performed and had found such favour that his *Scipione Affricano* was chosen to inaugurate the reopening of the Tor di Nona Theatre, under the patronage of Christina of Sweden, who took up her residence in Rome in 1668. The Queen vied with the cardinals and nobles in her encouragement of music. She was the leader of the pro-opera party in Rome; but her projects were greatly hampered by the opposition of Pope Innocent XI, whose hostility to opera was chiefly due to the behaviour of the Tor di Nona audiences. It is to Queen Christina's credit that she was one of the first to recognize the genius

of Alessandro Scarlatti. When the unknown young composer produced his first opera in Rome, in 1679, she immediately appointed him her "Maestro di Cappella"; and in her service, the inspirer of the future Neapolitan School of Opera gained his most valuable theatrical experience.

Rome, as a creative force in music lost ground rapidly in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. Even church music, in which Rome had always been the leader, showed signs of decadence. Organists still came from abroad to study with Bernardo Pasquini of Santa Maria Maggiore, who taught Johann Philipp von Krieger and Georg Muffat; and many Austrian pupils were sent to him by the Emperor Leopold I. But organ music was abandoning the traditions of Frescobaldi. The operatic style, which so many Roman church musicians cultivated, had an inevitable influence on their sacred compositions, both vocal and instrumental; and gradually, a showy, theatrical type of music ousted the beautiful liturgical and polyphonic styles. The *Sistine* Choir alone remained faithful to the classical traditions.

When initiative in vocal music seemed to have been completely stifled by the all-pervading influence of opera, Italy's astonishing musical vigour manifested itself in a new direction, that of instrumental music. The violin had now reached a high stage of perfection in the workshops of Cremona, and a new race of musicians appeared: violinist-composers who, as they gradually discovered the enormous possibilities of their instrument, were inspired to create original forms out of the fresh material the violin provided.

Rome became, in the last two decades of the seventeenth century, one of the principal centres of this important development thanks to the fact that Arcangelo Corelli (a native of Fusignano in the province of Romagna) settled there in 1681. He found enthusiastic appreciation amongst the cultured circles that frequented the courts of the music-loving Roman prelates. This intellectual environment influenced the mentality of the young composer, and, in spite of the deterioration of contemporary vocal music Corelli's works preserved a classical purity of style.

His two chief patrons were Cardinal Ottoboni and Queen Christina. "If one is fond of music," wrote the French archæologist, Jacques Spon who visited Rome at this period, "one can hear concerts every day: in the churches, at the Queen of Sweden's, in the palaces of the cardinals." Christina made Corelli music director of the Academy of Literature and Art she founded in her palace; and to her the composer dedicated the first book of his famous violin *sonatas*. The splendid scale on which Christina organized her musical performances gave Corelli an opportunity of experimenting in bigger instrumental masses than had hitherto been used, and which fore-shadow the modern orchestra. At the festival the Queen gave in honour of the accession of James II of England, in 1685, Corelli directed a *cantata* by Pasquini which was performed by a choir of a hundred, and an orchestra of a hundred and fifty, consisting chiefly of strings.

When the Queen of Sweden died two years later, Prince Pietro Ottoboni took her artistic society under his patronage and formed from it the famous "Accademia dell'Arcadia," where prelates, nobles, poets and musicians met

together for the cultivation of the arts. Ottoboni, who was created cardinal in 1689, on the accession of his uncle, Pope Alexander VIII, was the chief musical Mæcenas in Rome at the close of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century, and a devoted friend of Corelli. On being appointed Papal Vice-Chancellor, he took the musician to live with him at his official residence, the magnificent Palazzo della Cancelleria. There Corelli organized weekly concerts which were attended by Roman and foreign dignitaries of Church and State.

Instrumental music was given a place of honour at the cardinal's celebrated Monday concerts; and the most famous musicians of the day appeared as composers and virtuosi. Corelli, as first violin, conducted the orchestra in *Concerti da Camera*, or interpreted his latest violin *sonatas*; Franceschini of Bologna, the first 'cello virtuoso, initiated the audience into the beauties of his instrument; Bernardo Pasquini and Alessandro Scarlatti performed on the cembalo either the figured bass accompaniments of their *cantatas*, or the brilliant little solo pieces they composed for the instrument which, as its mechanism improved, began to interest serious musicians.

As cembalist, Alessandro Scarlatti was, however, soon to be surpassed by his son Domenico, whom Cardinal Ottoboni chose as the only worthy rival for young Handel when he paid his first visit to Rome in 1708. It was at the Palazzo della Cancelleria that these two young musicians held their famous contest, at which Handel was victorious at the organ, Domenico Scarlatti at the cembalo.

Thus, on the threshold of the eighteenth century, Rome was the headquarters of significant developments which owed their origin mainly to the creation of the first technically perfect instrument, the violin.

CHAPTER VII

THE VIOLIN: VIOLIN MUSIC

No new development so revolutionized musical conditions, or opened up such entirely new vistas for the composer, as did the invention of the violin in the mid-sixteenth century. Centuries of experiments in the construction of instruments of different shapes and dimensions, fashioned from many kinds of wood and tuned according to various systems, had preceded the creation of the violin. Among its ancestors were: the harp-like chrotta, the *lyra ad arco* or bowed lyre, the medieval rebec, the giga, the vielle and other primitive stringed instruments, whose sounds, first awakened by plucking the strings with the fingers or a plectrum, had later been produced by the pressure of the bow—an implement probably of Oriental origin. Those early types were, in the Renaissance period, superseded by the more highly developed viols, the immediate ancestors of the violin family.

Many European and Oriental countries contributed to the evolution of the early instruments, but it was Italy that created the perfect stringed models: the violin, viola and violoncello. During the late Middle Ages, Tyrolean and local wood carvers had constructed musical instruments in various parts of northern Italy. Later, when the interest in music grew at the Renaissance courts, and the demand for lutes and viols increased, the industry spread all over Italy; but the chief centres still remained such northern towns as: Brescia, Mantua, Cremona, Pavia, Bergamo, Bologna, Venice, and Milan. Thanks to their native artistic instinct, the Italian craftsmen produced models which, in addition to their technical qualities, were remarkable for beauty of design and ornamentation, as may be seen from the exquisite specimens that have found their way into the museums of Europe and America.

The popular plucked lute (from which the instrument-making craft took its name of "Liuteria") was eventually rivalled by the more sonorous and effective bowed viol. Like most early instruments, the viols were constructed in four sizes, differing in pitch, and tuned to the compass of the four principal voices: the soprano, contralto, tenor and bass. Thus, like the ancient wind-instruments, the cornetto and trombone, the viols could supply a missing vocal part, or give a purely instrumental rendering of a vocal composition. Castiglione, in his *Book of the Courtier*, has recorded the fact that the early musical connoisseurs at the court of Urbino delighted in that primitive form of string quartet, "the music of the four viols."

The two most important types were the *viola da gamba* (the leg viol), corresponding to our 'cello, and the *viola da braccio* (the arm viol). In order to produce an instrument of higher register, the latter was eventu-

ally reduced in size; and the resulting small model—known as the "little viol" or "violino"—became the direct ancestor of our violin. Famous among the fifteenth-century viol makers who helped on this important development were: Giovanni Kerlino of Brescia; the Franciscan friar, Pietro Dardelli of Mantua; and the Bavarian, Kaspar Duiffoprugcar (or Tieffenbrucker), who lived for a time at Bologna and settled later in France, and to whom the invention of the violin was at one time attributed.

But this glory belongs to Italy. It was Gasparo da Salò (native of Salò, a little town on Lake Garda) who, in his endeavours to improve the viol, evolved the violin model, about the year 1550. Da Salò, the first instrument maker to call himself "Maestro de Violini," had established himself at Brescia, a town then belonging to the Venetian Republic, which shared in the active musical life of sixteenth-century Venice. The principal structural alterations by means of which he transformed the husky viol into the more resonant, clear-toned violin, consisted in giving the instrument high, wide shoulders instead of a sloping bottle neck, arching the flat back, lowering the side bouts, and diminishing the number of strings from five or six, to four.

The violin-making trade was carried on in Brescia by da Salò's pupils until the early seventeenth century. But the perfect instrument, the model still in use to-day, was evolved in another town of Lombardy: Cremona (Monteverdi's birthplace), the centre of a rich agricultural region, in whose many churches and monasteries music was zealously cultivated.

The opening of a workshop in Cremona, in the middle of the sixteenth century by Andrea Amati—who had probably learned his craft from da Salò at Brescia—was an important incident in the history of music. Andrea Amati founded a regular dynasty of violin makers; three generations of the family: Andrea and his brother, his two sons and his grandson, devoted their lives to perfecting their chosen instrument. For over a hundred years, the Amati family experimented in the acoustical properties of different kinds of wood, whose grain they beautified and made more resonant by the application of famous varnishes of their own invention; they tried out many structural modifications; until, by modelling the surface of the violin according to an elaborate system of curves and arches, they greatly increased the beauty of its tone and shape. The family talent reached its culmination in Andrea's grandson, Niccolo, who lived through the greater part of the seventeenth century, and whose famous "Grand Amatis" are still prized as some of the finest instruments in existence.

Niccolo Amati's pupils and successors: Antonio Stradivari, Francesco Ruggeri and Guiseppe Guarneri del Gesù, all introduced a number of innovations of their own. But it was Stradivari who, after years of experiment, brought the Amati model to its highest perfection, and achieved an ideal instrument of mellow yet brilliant tone and exquisite proportions. The climax of achievement was reached in his last, or "Golden" period—so-called from the glowing colour he imparted to his violins by coating them with his celebrated golden varnish, and then submitting them to a process he

held to be indispensable: namely, leaving them to dry in the strong sunlight of Cremona. Of the many beautiful specimens he constructed, from the end of the seventeenth century till his death in 1737, the most noteworthy were: the sets of violins, violas and 'cellos he made for the courts of Tuscany and Spain, and the celebrated "Betta," "Delfino," and "Messia" violins.

It is significant that Corelli, the founder of the Italian School of violin playing, was a contemporary of Stradivari, and that among the music-lovers who commissioned him to build instruments was Corelli's patron, Cardinal Ottoboni.

The long line of famous Italian violin makers closed with Guarneri del Gesù, whose rich-toned instruments were Paganini's favourites. To such a pitch of perfection did the craftsmen of Cremona bring the violin, that no one has been able to improve on their designs. For three hundred years the model has remained practically unchanged and, in the course of time, the original instruments made by the Amati, Stradivari and Guarneri have acquired a fabulous value.

Hand in hand with the perfecting of the violin, went two other processes: the development of technique, and the creation of a style of composition suited to the capacity of the instrument. The violin, whose clear, vibrating, almost human tone no other instrument could emulate, was to endow music with new tone-colours and modes of expression; the technical material that developed out of its very structure was to shape itself into important new forms.

The growth of violin music was very gradual. Like the early organists, the players of viols and violins were at first obliged to content themselves with the execution of polyphonic music that had been written for the voice. And likewise, the violinists' first attempts at independent expression consisted in ornamenting their parts with improvised coloratura. These extempore passages, which showed off the technical qualities of their instrument, became such a recognized part of the violinist's art, that rules for the composition and execution of these *cadenzas* were formulated by Giovanni Bassano of San Marco, Venice, in 1585.

Although the organists, with their *ricercare* and *fantasias*, were then beginning to create a distinctive style of composition for their instrument, the viol and violin players continued to execute vocal music throughout the entire sixteenth century. In the last years of the century, a bowed instrument was mentioned for the first time in a score, when Giovanni Gabrieli, in one of his sacred *symphonies*, assigned a special part to the "violino" or little viol. By the beginning of the seventeenth century, however, the violin had so gained in prestige that it was studied by professional musicians, who had hitherto always been singers or organists.

Just then, the creation of opera provided the instruments with a new field. Claudio Monteverdi's introduction of the violin into the orchestra of his *Orfeo*, was a landmark in its history; for the novel technical devices he invented, with the object of producing realistic and dramatic effects, gave a great impetus to the development of technique. Soon, the viols lost

favour[1]; the wind instruments, so important in medieval days, took a secondary place; and the violin claimed the principal orchestral rôle in opera.

An instrument of such rapidly-increasing possibilities could not remain for long the mere adjunct of vocal music. The violin, which had begun by imitating the voice, came eventually to surpass its model; it finally broke free from vocal influence, as independent instrumental forms began to develop. The first attempts were chiefly experiments in ensemble music; but the violin, more brilliant and effective than its deeper-toned relatives, soon took the leading part and became the acknowledged soloist among the strings.

In collecting musical material for their instruments, the violinists took over every available form: fugal and other contrapuntal types, monody with harmonic accompaniment, and the dance forms which had always been proper to the strings. They also adopted the variations and other primitive thematic formulæ of the early organists. All this heterogenous material went to the construction of the *violin sonata* which, in its vague original form, consisted of a series of short movements in contrasting *tempi*, all in the same key, each based on a single subject. The quick movements were often dance rhythms; the slow were usually song forms. The latter, with their broad flowing *cantabile*, which brings into relief the beautiful singing quality of the instrument, form one of the most valuable contributions made by the Italian virtuosi-composers to the *violin sonata*.

It was fitting that Brescia, where the violin was created, should produce the first distinctive music for the instrument: the earliest *sonata*[2] for violin solo was published there in 1629 by Biagio Marini. Another native of Brescia, Giovanni Batista Fontana, surnamed "del Violino," developed the ideas of the great Venetian, Giovanni Gabrieli, by blending the timbres of strings and wind in *sonatas* where he grouped together the violin, 'cello, cornetto and bassoon. Mantua, which had witnessed Monteverdi's initial orchestral experiment with the violin, also had its pioneer composers: Carlo Farina, who eventually became court musician at Dresden and published several books of violin music there; and Ludovico Grossi, better known as Viadana, who wrote eight-part *symphonies* for various combinations of instruments with organ accompaniment in *basso continuo*.[3]

Venice, the first home of instrumental music, had, from the beginning of the seventeenth century, given itself up with such enthusiasm to the cult of opera, that little interest was taken there in other forms of music. The quiet, sedate town of Bologna, then one of the chief cities of the Papal States, was to be the first centre of the new instrumental developments. The principal

[1] The only survival of the viol type in the modern orchestra is the double bass.

[2] The word *Sonata* here merely signifies a piece to be played, as distinct from a *Cantata*, or piece to be sung. There was as yet no question of the real *Sonata Form*.

[3] The important rôle he gave to this type of "figured bass" accompaniment, which had been used before him by various organists and opera composers, caused him to be erroneously regarded as the inventor of the *basso continuo*.

nucleus of musical life in Bologna had always been the ancient Basilica of San Petronio, which possessed one of the oldest established choirs in all Italy. During the early seventeenth century, in imitation of San Marco's, Venice, the Basilica organ had been reinforced by a few stringed instruments. Their number was considerably increased by the violinist, Maurizio Cazzati—a musician trained in the Venetian tradition—who was appointed choir director at San Petronio in 1657. Cazzati gave such encouragement to the cultivation of the stringed instruments, that numbers of violinists from other parts gathered about him in Bologna, with the result that, in a few years, the town had become the recognized centre for violin playing. Amongst those who were responsible for this important development were: Cazzati's pupil, Giovanni Battista Vitali of Cremona, Giovanni Battista Bassani of Padua and Giuseppe Torelli of Verona, to mention only the most famous. These men, besides being excellent performers and teachers, played as composers an important rôle in shaping the *violin sonata* and the *concerto*.

The violoncello also found favour with the musicians of Bologna. Two members of the San Petronio orchestra were celebrated virtuosi on this instrument: Franceschini, later Corelli's colleague in Rome; and Domenico Gabrielli, nicknamed "Menghin del Violoncello," whose *ricercare* are the first known examples of unaccompanied 'cello solos.

The taste for instrumental music spread from the churches to the private houses. In 1666, a nobleman of Bologna, one Vincenzo Carrati, founded the Accademia Filarmonica, which became a centre of secular musical developments; it is one of the very few of these old musical societies that have survived to this day.

That same year, thirteen-year-old Arcangelo Corelli came to Bologna from the neighbouring province of Romagna, primarily to pursue his classical studies. It appears, however, that "on taking some lessons on the violin, he developed such a passion for it, that he gave no thought to anything else." Corelli studied the violin for four years with Giovanni Benvenuti and Luigi Brugnoli, who both held appointments at San Petronio; and having by then already acquired a high standard of musicianship, was made a member of the Accademia Filarmonica, at the age of seventeen. Thereupon, on the advice of his masters, Corelli went to Rome to study counterpoint with Matteo Simonello, director of the Pontifical choir, and to mature his art in the great capital. But Corelli remained proud of his connection with the famous violin school of Bologna, and his first compositions are signed: "Arcangelo, il Bolognese." He travelled for some years in Germany, where Italian musical developments were followed with great interest, before settling definitely in Rome. There, in his capacity as musical director to Cardinal Ottoboni, he had all the practical opportunities he needed for developing his ideas both in the solo and the orchestral domains.

Corelli's position in music is somewhat similar to that of Palestrina. Neither musician was a revolutionary innovator; the art of both men represents the climax of a long development. Earnest study had equipped Corelli with all the technical science accumulated by the violinists of the preceding

fifty years, and he was endowed with the requisite skill and judgment to fix the general lines of technical execution and to perfect the musical forms that had been evolved. By eliminating unsuitable material, simplifying the still largely polyphonic fabric, developing the lyrical element, and by drawing the flowing lines of his melodies with a sure sense of linear beauty, Corelli gave a definite form to the *violin sonata*, which was the ancestor both of the *piano sonata* and of the *orchestral symphony*.

The five books of *sonatas*, each containing twelve works, which were published during Corelli's lifetime, are based on the two principal violin forms of that day: the *Sonata da Chiesa* (Sacred Sonata), which consisted of a series of *adagio* and *allegro* movements; and the lighter *Sonata da Camera* (Chamber Sonata), which was built up chiefly on dance rhythms and song forms. These *sonatas* were usually written for a trio of two violins and a violone ('cello), with the addition of a *basso continuo* accompaniment, which was played on the organ, in the case of sacred *sonatas*, and on the cembalo, in the case of secular works. In Corelli's *Opus* 5 the violin emerges definitely as a solo instrument. These *sonatas* contain movements of remarkable beauty; notably the *adagios*, whose deep emotion is spiritualized by the restraint and nobility of Corelli's style.

Other experiments in instrumental combinations made by seventeenth century composers prepared the way for various types of chamber music that reached maturity at a later period. Thus, Gregorio Allegri, Papal Cantor and composer of the famous *Miserere* published, in 1652, a quartet for two violins, a viola and a bass; the Roman opera composer, Stefano Landi, transformed vocal polyphonic music, in varying numbers of parts, into their corresponding instrumental equivalents; and the piano quintet is already foreshadowed in Legrenzi's *La Cetra*, a collection of pieces written for four stringed instruments and a cembalo.

In addition, the germ of future orchestral developments can be seen in the *Concerto Grosso*—a form which made its appearance at the very end of the seventeenth century—in which the string trio is accompanied by a small string orchestra. There is some diversity of opinion as to whether this form was created by Corelli or by Torelli, both of whom composed works of this type about the same time. Torelli was, however, undoubtedly responsible for the *Concerto da Camera*, in which the violin began to achieve the predominance which its technical superiority now demanded.

Although Corelli remained in Rome during the greater part of his mature life, his influence was nevertheless widespread, thanks to his pupils, several of whom, like Gemigniani, Locatelli, Gasparini and Somis, were celebrated at home and abroad. Corelli's theories on technique became widely diffused by means of a *Violin Method*, published by Gemigniani in London, which was practically a summary of the master's teaching. In France, his influence was particularly strong; the first French violinist of note, Jean-Baptiste Anet, was such a favourite pupil of Corelli's as to be called his adopted son; while Somis transmitted Corelli's style to the more celebrated French violinist-composer, Leclair.

When Corelli died in 1713, a new musical epoch was beginning: the era of the violin virtuosi, who visited the great cities of Europe, astonishing their audiences with a technical dexterity that bordered on the magical, and delighting them with novel styles of music which suggested that Italy's inspiration was inexhaustible. The progress in technique can be judged from such compositions as the *concertos* of the Venetian, Antonio Vivaldi, who elaborated the solo rôle of the violin. He also introduced into his music a new impressionistic style which was in contrast to the classical style of Corelli. "Il Prete Rosso" (The Red Priest)[1], as Vivaldi was nicknamed, was a brilliant performer and a master of musical form. J. S. Bach found interest in studying the structure of his *concertos*, and immortalized them by arranging several for clavichord and organ. The study of the violin was now no longer localized; great players appeared in many parts of Italy. The Florentine, Veracini, surpassed even Gemigniani in virtuosity. His superiority was chiefly due to his individual style of bowing, the secret of which he said is to have imparted to Giuseppe Tartini, a virtuoso who, after Corelli, did most for the development of the Italian school of violin playing.

Tartini is one of the most interesting figures in eighteenth-century Italian music. His early career, which began in Padua, was full of dramatic episodes. Having secretly married a pupil belonging to an influential family, he was forced to fly from Padua in order to escape persecution, and took refuge in a monastery at Assisi. He remained hidden there for two years, during which he continued his musical studies and began to interest himself in the acoustical problems he worked out later. At last, in 1715, on the feast of the "Pardon of St. Francis," he was forgiven and allowed to rejoin his wife in Padua.

A period of intensive study, undertaken with the object of emulating the technical perfection of Veracini, was followed by triumphant tours at home and abroad. In spite of pressing invitations to settle in France or in England, Tartini decided to return to Padua, where he was appointed first violinist in the orchestra of the Basilica of St. Anthony. The violin school he founded at Padua attracted numbers of students from so many different countries, that it was known as "the School of the Nations." His most famous pupil was Nardini, who played with such intense emotion that his contemporary, Schubart, wrote: "he brings tears to the eyes of the stony-hearted courtiers, and his own tears flow down on his violin." Yet, none of Tartini's pupils could rival the beauty of his tone or the fiery brilliance of his execution; as a virtuoso, he remained supreme.

As a composer, the fertility of Tartini's inspiration was phenomenal. He wrote hundreds of instrumental works, chiefly violin *sonatas* and *concertos*, and chamber music for various combinations of instruments. His position in violin literature is not yet clearly defined, owing to the fact that many of his compositions are still unpublished. A number of autograph

[1] The origin of the nickname is by some attributed to the colour of Vivaldi's hair; by others to the fact that he conducted the choir of the Venetian Conservatoire of the Pietà, the pupils of which—and possibly the conductor also—were dressed in red.

MSS of his violin *sonatas* and *concertos* are preserved in the archives of the Basilica of St. Anthony at Padua. There, also, can be seen his notes for his theoretical treatise on the "third sound" (or the generating sound), known as "Tartini's Tones": a phenomenon for which the acoustical knowledge of his day could not account, but which was to be explained a century later by Helmholtz's theory of differential tones.[1]

The cult of virtuosity had as disastrous an effect on instrumental music as it had had on singing, and gradually brought about a decadence in violin music, similar to that which overtook the opera during the eighteenth century. Yet, Italy still possessed composers capable of carrying instrumental forms to a higher stage of development. At Milan, Tartini's contemporary, G-B. Sammartini, produced *symphonies*, based on a treatment of thematic material that foreshadowed the modern orchestral style. Sammartini's *symphonies* aroused little interest in Italy; but they found their way to Austria, and helped to inspire Prince Esterhazy's music director, Joseph Haydn, the creator of the modern orchestral symphony.

The genius of Haydn also overshadows the fine chamber music of the violoncellist, Boccherini, who did much for the evolution of form and technique. He founded a string quartet in Florence; but settled later in Madrid, where he was given an appointment at court. This tendency on the part of Italian musicians to expatriate themselves, gradually dissipated native musical energies, and was doubtless one of the causes of the eventual decay of the great Italian schools.

Meanwhile, Italian violinists of remarkable technical powers continued to succeed one another. The classical style was maintained by two celebrated Piedmontese violinists: Pugnani—who belonged to the School of Somis and Tartini—and his pupil, the famous Viotti. Both travelled all over Europe as virtuosi and composed brilliant violin *concertos* and chamber music of various types. But creative talent in Italy diminished noticeably from the late eighteenth century onwards, and a composer's works rarely survived his personal popularity; except when—as in the case of Paganini—amazing technique, combined with a fantastic personality, placed the composer on a plane apart, and endowed him with an almost legendary fame.

The character of Italian music changed during this period; it became less spontaneous and intimate. The virtuosi, who spent their best years in triumphant journeys from capital to capital, lost touch with the spirit of those tranquil Italian towns where, nurtured by age-old classical traditions, instrumental music had attained its first splendid flowering.

Italy, having invented the violin, produced the first violinists, and created the first great violin music, now, in the fullness of her maturity, handed over her heritage to Germany. It was from Handel that Corelli's Violin Sonata received its further development, a generation later. Italy never witnessed

[1] Another interesting memorial of Tartini, preserved in the library of "Il Santo" at Padua, is the Sketch Book in which he jotted down ideas for themes, and planned the rough drafts of movements. At the beginning of some of these musical fragments are mysterious cryptograms that have so far never been satisfactorily solved.

the fulfilment of the magnificent promise inherent in the masterpieces of Corelli, Veracini, Tartini. The break in their great tradition has been bewailed by many a modern Italian musician. Verdi, alluding to Corelli's sonatas, is said to have exclaimed: "And to think that we are deluded enough nowadays to maintain that music is progressing!"[1]

[1] Quoted in a work compiled on the occasion of Corelli's second centenary in 1913: "Fusignano ad Arcangelo Corelli," by C. Piancastelli.

CHAPTER VIII

THE OPERA IN NAPLES

BEFORE Italy's sovereignty in music passed from her, she celebrated during the eighteenth century, a final period of triumph, with the Neapolitan School of Opera—which represents the sunset of Italy's musical glory.

The contemporary world did not realize that the tide had already turned in favour of German music on the appearance of Bach, Handel, Haydn and Mozart; for their significance was not as yet fully appreciated. After visiting Naples in 1770 (the year of Beethoven's birth), Charles Burney could still extoll the superiority of Italian music; "a species of music more delicate and refined, than is to be found in the rest of Europe."

It was only at the close of the seventeenth century, when opera was deteriorating in Venice, and when it was practically dead in Rome, that Naples, in a sudden burst of musical vitality, produced a succession of composers who monopolized the opera houses of the great cities of Europe for the best part of a century.

It seems strange that no important development should have occurred there earlier, since Naples had been one of the first Italian towns to interest itself in medieval polyphony, and that art had been constantly fostered in its churches. Besides, Naples had produced one of the richest veins of folk-music in all Italy: the collections of Neapolitan *Canzone* and *Villanelle* published during the sixteenth century had rivalled the songs of Venice in popularity at the Renaissance courts.

It is possible that centuries of foreign dominion had hampered the artistic evolution of the race whose beautiful land had been the prey of successive Angevin and Spanish invaders. Yet, the foreign rulers had encouraged the cultivation of music. It was to the Aragonese court at Naples that the great Fleming, Tinctoris, had come in 1470, as Master of the Royal Choir; and a few years later, the equally famous Italian, Gafurio, had held a similar position at the church of the Annunziata, before he was recalled to Milan by his liege-lord, Ludovico Il Moro. Throughout the fifteenth century Naples had attracted various classes of emigrants from the Spanish Peninsula: merchants came to traffic in the wool and silk trades, and poets and musicians flocked from Catalonia and Aragon to the brilliant Neapolitan court of the Aragonese kings.

Fresh currents of Spanish influence flowed into Naples in the two following centuries when, on being conquered by Ferdinand the Catholic, the erstwhile kingdom of Naples became a Spanish province; and such it was to remain for two hundred and thirty years. During this long period, the customs and culture of Spain deeply permeated both the social life and the art and music of Naples. It was a Spanish song-form, the *Villancicos*,

which inspired the Neapolitan *Villanella* and *Barzelletta;* folk-types which, in their turn, influenced the art-songs of many early Italian composers. The Spaniards also introduced into Naples their favourite stringed instruments, the lute and the chitarra (the former an instrument of Arabian origin, brought to Spain by the Moors), on which the Neapolitans acquired such skill that they were greatly sought after as instrumentalists at the northern Renaissance courts.

It was, however, in the domain of Church Music that the first noteworthy developments occurred. The two chief centres of ecclesiastical music, the Chapel Royal and the Church of the Annunziata, had been served by a succession of Spanish, Flemish and Italian organists and choir-masters from the sixteenth century onwards. The Spanish taste in church music predominated during the second half of the sixteenth century when two renowned Spanish musicians, Diego Ortiz and Francesco Martinez di Loscos, acted successively as choir directors to the viceroys.

At the end of the century, this Spanish influence was almost obliterated by a powerful current of Roman polyphony, introduced to Naples by the Belgian, de Macque, who had lived for several years in Rome during the period of Palestrina's fame. The Roman style stamps the works of the choir-masters and organists—for the most part Neapolitans—who held appointments in the churches of Naples during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The most celebrated of these local musicians were: Giovanni da Nola; his pupils, Scipione Stella and Camillo Lambardi; the latter's son, Francesco; Scipione and Luigi Dentice and Giovanni Trabaci. Like the contemporary church composers of Venice and Rome, they wrote chiefly polyphonic church music, organ *ricercare* and *toccatas*, and secular *madrigals.*

The Roman influence in Naples was intensified by the coming of the Oratorians who opened a house there in 1586, where they organized musical services similar to those held in their Roman oratory. The type of music they favoured can be judged from the fact that the oldest works in the Oratorian library in Naples are two books of *motets* by Annibale Stabile, a disciple of Palestrina. There also can be seen forgotten compositions by local musicians of the period: MS copies and early printed editions of *motets* by de Macque, Stella, Dentice and Carlo Gesualdo, Prince of Venosa. The active part taken by the Oratorians in the cultivation of music in Naples, during the seventeenth century, possibly accounts for the fact that local composers remained for long faithful to the polyphonic forms and showed reluctance to adopt the monodic style which was then spreading all over Italy.

Secular polyphony, represented by the madrigal, found fruitful soil in Naples. The most famous Neapolitan madrigalist was Carlo Gesualdo, Prince of Venosa, the outstanding musical personality in sixteenth-century Naples. He employed several instrumentalists and singers and founded an Accademia in his palace, the members of which devoted themselves to the composition of *madrigals*; many of the poems they set to music were written for the Accademia by the poet Tasso who was a friend of Gesualdo. The

madrigals of the Prince of Venosa are some of the most interesting secular compositions of the late sixteenth century; for his frequent use of the chromatic and his daring modulations give his music an individual quality, rare at that period.

As in the northern courts, music played a part in the official viceregal ceremonies and in the popular carnival festivals. The Neapolitan patricians also gave musical performances in their houses, at which were to be heard local celebrities like Gianlionardo dell'Arpa as well as musicians from the northern centres. Such concerts are mentioned by the composer Luigi Dentice, in his *Dialogues on Music*, which throw valuable light on the musical life of sixteenth-century Naples. He records that, in 1552, the famous Jaches Wert—favourite composer of the d'Este and Gonzaga princes—came from distant Ferrara to take part in a festival. Perhaps Wert then heard for the first time the Neapolitan *villanelle*, on which he modelled many of the part-songs he wrote for the ladies of Mantua. Some years later, musical Naples was represented in Ferrara by the organist Scipione Stella who, as a member of Carlo Gesualdo's household, accompanied the Prince when he went to Ferrara to marry the Duke's sister, Eleanora d'Este. The secular instruments: the lute, the viol, the seven-stringed guitar and the cembalo were also assiduously cultivated by a group of Neapolitan nobles belonging to the Filomarmo, Caraffa and Gesualdo families, several of whom gained a reputation for their virtuosity on these favourite Renaissance instruments.

Incidents recorded by the Flemish Papal Cantor, Ghislino d'Ankerts, who was for a time in the service of Pierluigi Caraffa, show what a passionate love of music animated Neapolitans of all classes. He relates that when musicians played in the streets, sometimes long after midnight, "people would get out of bed and come to the windows or even out into the streets in their nightshirts," and stay up all night listening to the music. His patron, Caraffa, "so delighted in music, that he always kept a number of salaried musicians in his household"; and like some other Renaissance nobles, Caraffa found music an anodyne to pain. "It often happened," says d'Ankerts, "that when he was ill with a fever, he would have music sung and played to him. And by dint of having certain favourite works repeated several times over, he would become so intent on the music, that the illness would run its course without his having felt much pain or discomfort. Likewise, when he was tormented by gout, he declared that so long as he kept his mind fixed on the music, he felt the pain much less."

In spite of the musical activity of the Neapolitans during the sixteenth century, no outstanding group of composers evolved a characteristic school, such as Venice and Rome produced at this period. Nevertheless, it was then that the foundations of the future musical glory of Naples were laid, by the establishment of schools which, though at first entirely dissociated from any artistic purpose, were destined to have an important influence on subsequent musical developments. These institutions, similar in origin to the music schools of Venice, were in Naples chiefly devoted to the education of boys.

The four famous Conservatoires of Naples were originally founded to relieve the widespread distress that reigned there in the early sixteenth century as a consequence of the struggle between France and Spain for the possession of this desirable province and its wealthy capital. After the siege of Naples by the French in 1528, thousands of children were left orphaned and destitute. A private act of charity—which would appear utterly inadequate to the needs of the situation—gave the first incentive to the establishment of the four great Conservatoires. In order to provide shelter for some of the innumerable homeless children who wandered about the streets of the city after the siege, a poor shoemaker of Naples hired a disused chapel. Nine years later, this small "home" had grown into the big Orphanage of Santa Maria di Loreto. The orphans were taught various trades, and there is no mention of music in the annals of the institute until the end of the century when an entry occurs regarding the appointment of organists for the chapel. From that time forward, however, Santa Maria di Loreto took on more and more the character of a music school.

The second foundation, the Orphanage of Sant'Onofrio, had likewise developed into a conservatoire by the mid-seventeenth century. Next, a pious confraternity founded a home, known as the "Pietà dei Turchini,"[1] in which orphan children were trained to assist the members of the confraternity in their charitable works. There, too, music eventually became the principal subject of instruction. The fourth of these charity schools was that of the "Poveri di Gesù Cristo" (Christ's Poor). Originally established with alms collected for the maintenance of destitute Neapolitan children, it became in time the most famous of the conservatoires.

The successful results of the training and the increasing demand for musicians during the seventeenth century, especially in connection with the churches, led to the rapid expansion of these music schools. The best musicians in Naples were engaged as masters; and soon the musical life of the town centred largely in the activities of these four flourishing Conservatoires which gave many famous composers to Italy during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[2]

As so frequently happens in the domain of artistic evolution, the style in which Naples achieved its most distinctive expression originated elsewhere. The type of opera that was to become characteristic of the Neapolitan school, and which consisted largely of a succession of luscious melodies adorned with elaborate vocalises, was initiated by a northern composer, Alessandro Stradella of Modena. Stradella's style was based on the best elements of the Venetian opera and the Roman oratorio, enriched by his own individual melodic inspiration and dynamic vitality; these characteristics soon made his operas famous, although his career was cut short by his

[1] The children were dressed in a dark shade of *turquoise* blue.

[2] After the mid-eighteenth century, the Conservatoires were closed one by one, till all their activities were merged in one institute, the College of San Sebastiano, later in its turn, to be transformed into the existing Conservatorio of San Pietro in Maiella.

murder in 1682, when he was thirty-seven years old.[1] Few authenticated facts have come to light concerning Stradella's life, and no connection with Naples has been traced. Yet, the operatic style of this original genius influenced both Francesco Provenzale, the founder of the Neapolitan School of Opera, and the great Sicilian, Alessandro Scarlatti, who brought Naples its first musical notoriety.

Opera had been popular in other Italian towns for half a century before it was introduced to Naples by the Spanish Viceroy, Oñate, who brought an opera company from Venice in 1651. Their inaugural performance of Monteverdi's *Incoronazione di Poppea* found such favour with the Neapolitan public that the company remained on permanently. In addition to the works of Monteverdi, their repertoire consisted chiefly of the operas of Cavalli and Cesti, contemporary composers of the Venetian school. This new influence bore fruit a few years later in the first Neapolitan music drama, Francesco Provenzale's *Teseo*.

Like Stradella, Provenzale had a natural gift for melody, and the chief interest in his operas centres in the *arias* which, by their expressiveness and pathos, recall those of Monteverdi. In vocal style, they are akin to the Neapolitan *villanella*; and Provenzale occasionally emphasized the local colour in his works, by introducing themes and rhythms borrowed directly from folk music. In his capacity as master at the Conservatoires of Santa Maria di Loreto and the Pietà dei Turchini, Provenzale had a considerable influence on the initial development of music in his native town.

The very year that Naples witnessed the production of Provenzale's first opera (1659), Alessandro Scarlatti—one of the last great figures in Italian music—was born in Sicily. This composer, whose celebrity was shared by Naples, the city where he spent the greater part of his mature life, moulded the operatic form that was to be universally adopted by the Neapolitans of the following generation.

Of Scarlatti's student years nothing is definitely known; but it is surmised, partly from the internal evidence of the style of his early works, that he studied in Rome with Carissimi, and with Bernardo Pasquini who was organist at Santa Maria Maggiore and the Ara Cœli. At the age of twenty, with his first opera, Scarlatti was fortunate enough to attract the notice of that zealous patroness of music, Queen Christina of Sweden who, as we have seen, took the young composer under her protection. During the years Scarlatti spent in her service, his natural bent for opera was intensified. For, in spite of the opposition of Pope Innocent XII (who was as hostile to opera as Innocent XI had been), Christina gave her enthusiastic support to the Tor di Nona Theatre. The operas of Legrenzi, Cesti, Pasquini and Stradella,

[1] It appears that Stradella's enemies had already planned to murder him seven years earlier. The story goes, that hired bravoes followed him to Rome in 1675, and lay in wait for him in the hall adjoining the Church of St. John of the Florentine Nation, where he conducted his Oratorio, *St. John the Baptist*, on Passion Sunday of that "Holy Year." But the beauty of Stradella's music so worked upon the susceptibilities of the assassins, that they gave their victim warning and allowed him to escape.

which were frequently performed there, influenced the young music director's tastes. Scarlatti adopted the general plan of the Venetian opera composers, while giving to his operas a deeper melodic beauty, inspired no doubt by the influence of Stradella, whom he was soon to surpass in this respect.

Scarlatti was given an ideal opportunity for showing his capacity as an opera composer when he was appointed Musician to the Court of Naples in 1684. During his first eighteen years of undisturbed activity there, one of his principal duties consisted in providing two new operas yearly; one for court theatre, the other for the San Bartolomeo Opera House. This continuous demand for operas (Scarlatti was to write a hundred and fifty), led him to establish a conventional plan for his works. He concentrated on the *aria*, which was the most popular item with the public, till his operas came to comprise as many as fifty of these vocal solos, for which he evolved a regular formula. They were constructed in three sections: an opening melody, followed by a contrasting theme, after which the first part was repeated from the beginning, or "da capo."

This type of air, to be known as the "Da Capo" *Aria*, had already made its appearance in a vaguer shape in the operas of Monteverdi and other early composers; but in its more developed form, it represents one of Scarlatti's most important contributions to opera. His *arias* were ornamented with coloratura passages, some of which were provided by the composer, others being invented by the singers who were then expected to be able to supply original *cadenzas*.

During his long residence in Naples, Scarlatti did not lose touch with his Roman friends. Consequently, when Naples became involved in the War of the Spanish Succession, it was to Rome that he looked for shelter and employment. Like Corelli and so many other musicians, Scarlatti found a friendly patron in Cardinal Ottoboni who made him one of his music directors and obtained a small post for him as assistant choir-master at Santa Maria Maggiore. But there was no scope in Rome for Scarlatti's activities as opera composer; for there was no Opera House, the Tor di Nona Theatre having been demolished a few years previously by order of Pope Innocent XII.

On leaving Naples, Scarlatti had at first hoped to be engaged by the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Ferdinand the Third de' Medici, a devotee of opera, who had built himself a theatre in his villa at Pratolino, near Florence, where he organized frequent operatic performances. But although he commissioned Scarlatti to write a number of operas, the composer obtained no permanent post at the Tuscan Court. His music was too classical for the Grand Duke's tastes, and he was obliged to content himself with his poorly paid post as assistant choir-master in Rome.

Like the Roman composers, Scarlatti now devoted himself chiefly to the composition of *cantatas* and *oratorios*. Among the works of this period was a Christmas *oratorio*—written for the traditional Christmas Eve celebrations at the Papal Court—into which Scarlatti introduced a new feature, a

Pastoral Symphony, modelled on the bagpipe music of the Abruzzi shepherds who used to play in the streets of Rome at Christmas time. This little movement probably inspired Handel's famous *Pastoral Symphony* in the *Messiah*; for Handel, who was in Rome at this period, took good ideas wherever he found them.

Scarlatti's *cantatas* were frequently performed at the Palazzo della Cancelleria concerts where he came into close contact with Corelli and Pasquini. The prestige gained by these men can be gauged from the fact that the exclusive Accademia dell'Arcadia, hitherto restricted to literary celebrities, opened its ranks to musicians in 1706; the first three musical members enrolled being: Pasquini, Corelli and Alessandro Scarlatti. At Cardinal Ottoboni's concerts, Scarlatti gained a valuable knowledge of the recent developments in instrumental technique and style; and, though primarily interested in vocal music, he realized the importance of these new musical elements which were to enrich his subsequent works.

When the War of the Spanish Succession ended, in 1714, Scarlatti returned to Naples, where he was reinstated in his post as Director of the Chapel Royal Choir, and commissioned once more to write operas for the Neapolitan theatres. The ban on opera being removed in Rome some years later, he went back to conduct a series of his works at the Capranica Theatre; but Naples, which offered him a wider operatic field, remained his headquarters.

The operas and cantatas which Scarlatti composed during this period of his maturity have a new breadth and grandeur of form and a greater dramatic effectiveness; qualities which are partly due to his development of the instrumental material. Scarlatti completed the structure of the Italian Overture with its three sections in contrasting tempi: *allegro*, *andante*, *allegro*. A significant innovation appears in his opera *Tigrane*, produced in 1715, where he employed for the first time the instrumental grouping that was to form the foundation of the modern orchestra: a quintet of strings, used in conjunction with oboes and horns. Scarlatti also gave attention to orchestral technique and execution; and so well did he train his instrumentalists that Corelli, on visiting Naples, found Scarlatti's orchestra better than his own in Rome.

Scarlatti's music represents the transition from the old to the modern style. His experiments in harmony and his exploitation of the dramatic possibilities of discords, led him away from the contrapuntal treatment which still prevailed in instrumental music at the end of the seventeenth century; but which was now to be gradually abandoned in favour of the free interplay of themes and their organic development. Scarlatti's rôle as an innovator consisted chiefly in pointing out the way to those who came after him. For, in spite of his creative ingenuity and his preoccupation with melodic beauty, the fundamental character of his music is as impersonal and classical as that of Corelli.

Scarlatti had no real disciple among the Neapolitan composers. Although, on his return from Rome, he had been appointed Director of

the Conservatoire of the Poveri di Gesù Cristo, his varied interests left him little leisure for teaching. His only follower, the only pupil in whom he recognized a kindred spirit, was the Saxon, Adolph Hasse, who came to study with Alessandro Scarlatti in 1724, the last year of the composer's life. And it was through Hasse that Scarlatti's music was diffused in Germany and came to exercise a profound influence on the composers of the new German school.

Meanwhile, the young generation—who were to create the Neapolitan School of Opera, properly so-called—were being trained in the four conservatoires of Naples by Provenzale's successors: Nicolò Fago and Gaetano Greco. The long succession of Neapolitan composers whose works enjoyed a phenomenal popularity during the eighteenth century in France, Germany, Austria, England and Russia, are little more than names to us to-day; yet they hold a definite place in the history of opera, the form to which they devoted their chief energies.

A few, however, distinguished themselves also in church and instrumental music; notably, the two pioneers of the Neapolitan school: Durante—a composer of sacred music who taught in three of the conservatoires—and Leonardo Leo, a pupil of the Pietà dei Turchini, who became one of its most famous masters. His operas, celebrated in their day, were modelled on those of Scarlatti; but his fame rests on his instrumental music; and his violoncello concertos, accompanied by two violins and a bass, are among the many Italian instrumental works that foreshadow the string quartet.

The conservatoires, under the direction of musicians of this calibre, continued to produce talented and highly-trained pupils who made Naples the great centre for opera throughout the eighteenth century. Among them was Nicolò Porpora,[1] the founder of a school of operatic singing in which the most celebrated vocalists of the day were trained. As an opera composer he was, however, surpassed by his contemporaries, Leonardo Vinci and Francesco Feo. Another noteworthy name is that of Logroscino, a pupil of Durante, who, by developing the comic scenes of the Venetian and Roman opera composers, created the *Opera Buffa*, or comic opera.

For over a century, Naples flooded the European capitals with operas consisting chiefly of recitatives interspersed with charming *arias* lavishly ornamented with *fioritura*; a style to become known as the "Concert Opera," because of the preponderance of solo numbers. The eighteenth century Neapolitans abandoned both Scarlatti's classicism and his prophetic innovations. As a rule, their instrumental material was very slight; the chorus was practically ignored, and vocal ensembles rarely went beyond an occasional duet, except in comic opera, where each act ended in a concerted *finale*. But, since the public had fallen under the spell of the *aria*, the Neapolitan composers were ready to devote their remarkable melodic talent to the composition of "Concert" operas which lacked all dramatic truth and offered little scope for further musical development.

[1] Late in life, Porpora taught singing in Vienna, where his young accompanist, Haydn, learnt much from him as regards vocal technique.

Occasionally, a composer of genius infused real beauty into this conventional form; notably, the short-lived Pergolesi, who studied at the Conservatorio dei Poveri and was already famous when he died at the age of twenty-six. Two works of his have survived: his *Stabat Mater*, which made his reputation during his lifetime, and his little comic opera, *La Serva Padrona*, which still charms modern audiences. "Ah! le joli génie simple et naturel!" exclaimed de Brosses, when he heard Pergolesi's music in 1739, a couple of years after the composer's death. After his visit to Venice, the President of the Dijon Parliament had gone to Naples, "the capital of the musical world"; and his letters give a vivid impression of the flourishing state of Neapolitan music. He mentions among the composers whose operas were most appreciated at this period: Alessandro Scarlatti, Sarri, Vinci, Leo, "and my charming Pergolesi." De Brosses was astounded at the fertility of the Italian composers and the rapidity with which they worked; he remarks that if music was not printed in Italy, it was because it would be impossible to keep pace with the quantity of new works "which pour in from every side" ("qui pleuvent de toutes parts").

At the opera, in addition to the singing, the Frenchman admired the playing of the big orchestra which accompanied the *Grand Arias*. He describes how as many as a hundred instruments, strings and wind, supported the solo voice without covering it, their execution being perfectly accurate and precise, in spite of the fact that there was no conductor. These *arias* provided practically the only interest in the Neapolitan operas of that period. De Brosses relieved the tedium of the long, monotonous recitatives by playing a game of chess; and he remarks that on the production of an opera by Sarri, the new Bourbon King, Carlo the First, "talked throughout the first half of the performance and slept throughout the second half." De Brosses greatly preferred to the serious opera, the lively, amusing and wonderfully-acted, Neapolitan *Intermezzi*: short, two-act comic operas, which were performed, curiously enough, between the acts of tragedies; among de Brosses's favourite *Intermezzi* was Pergolesi's *La Serva Padrona*.

In Jomelli, Piccinni and Paisiello, the Conservatorio of Sant'Onofrio produced a last brilliant group of composers. Their world-famous operas were the principal works on the repertoire of the new San Carlo Opera House when Charles Burney went to Naples, in 1770, to collect material for his *History of Music*. The standard of the operatic performances had then deteriorated, and Burney's criticisms were severe, especially as regards the singing. But he found the compositions of the contemporary Neapolitans "excellent with regard to counterpoint and invention, and in their manner of executing them;" he adds, "there is an energy and fire not to be met with perhaps elsewhere in the whole universe. It is so ardent as to border upon fury."

Burney made a special study of the Conservatoires, and obtained details concerning their origin and development from Jomelli. He was, however, greatly disappointed with the performances given at the Church of San Francesco by the pupils of the three existing Conservatoires in turn. His

disappointment increased when he visited the schools and heard the students play. "They seem to have degenerated to-day," he wrote. "But such institutions, like everything human, are liable to change. The day will come when they will reawaken, like their neighbour, Vesuvius, and perhaps with a new vigour." Burney did not realize that the great Conservatoires of Naples were doomed.

One more star shone in the Neapolitan firmament at the close of the eighteenth century: Domenico Cimarosa, whose career is an example of the celebrity to which a talented young Neapolitan musician could attain at that period, however humble his origin. Admitted as a destitute orphan to the Conservatorio of Santa Maria di Loreto, Cimarosa, after eleven years training, rapidly achieved such fame as a composer of both serious and comic opera, that he was invited to Russia as music director to Catherine the Great. From there, he went to Vienna to the Court of the Emperor Leopold the Second, for whom he wrote his famous comic opera, *Il Matrimonio Segreto*, whose humour and melodiousness have not lost their freshness even to-day.

Most of the Neapolitan operas of that epoch eventually followed those of Venice and Rome into oblivion; partly because of their poor *libretti* and stereotyped plots, partly because musical taste changed suddenly in the nineteenth century. Scarlatti's operas and cantatas were also quickly forgotten in this era of musical transformation. Yet this composer remains a highly significant figure, because of the intrinsic beauty and structural perfection of his music, and the influence it exercised on subsequent developments.

Scarlatti was one of the last Italians to inspire the great German composers of the eighteenth century. More or less marked traces of Alessandro Scarlatti's style can indeed be seen in the music of Handel, J. S. Bach, Gluck, Haydn; and, above all, in Mozart, whose lovely melodies have an Italian suavity, whose art has deep roots in Italian soil.

CHAPTER IX

THE CEMBALO AND THE PIANO

ITALIAN MUSIC FOR KEYBOARD INSTRUMENTS

To Italy, we owe one more instrument, the piano, as well as the foundations of its technique and style. For, although the piano only came into general use in the nineteenth century, after its mechanism had been perfected in Germany, the fundamental principles of its construction had already been discovered in the beginning of the eighteenth century by Bartolomeo Cristofori of Padua; and the compositions of the early Italian organists and cembalists contain in embryo the modern pianistic idiom.

Just as the violin, viola and 'cello were derived from certain elementary stringed instruments of medieval times, so the gradual evolution of the keyboard instruments: the piano, as well as the earlier harpsichord, clavichord, clavicembalo, etc., can be traced back to those primitive instruments: the psaltery, the dulcimer and the monochord. Their structure was based on the most rudimentary elements: a sounding board, fitted with one or more strings which were either plucked by the fingers or a plectrum, or hit by a metal tangent; or else struck with small hammers—as in the case of the dulcimer, which is, for this reason, regarded as the ancestor of the piano.

At an early period, some of these instruments acquired a tiny keyboard which simplified the execution, by reducing the work of the fingers to a mechanical act. For the keys were connected with a mechanism which automatically divided the strings into the required lengths, and simultaneously evoked the sound by means of a quill or a metal tangent. In the course of time, as these instruments were developed, their mechanism perfected, their compass extended, and their tone strengthened; their dimensions gradually increased. And eventually, from the tiny portable instruments of medieval days was evolved the huge modern grand piano. The craftsmen of several countries helped on the development of the clavichord and cembalo; but many important improvements are to the credit of the Italian instrument makers of the Renaissance period.[1]

Two distinct types were evolved: the box-shaped clavichord (at first called the *monochord*, after the early one-stringed instrument from which it derived) whose soft, faint tone, produced by metal tangents, could be varied

[1] As might be expected, the d'Este family were in the van of this musical development. Clavichords were made for them at Modena in the mid-fifteenth century; and, as early as 1598, a cembalo maker, writing to the Duke of Modena, mentions a "Piano e Forte" he is engaged on. No description of this instrument remains, but it was possibly an early attempt at the pianoforte.

by the pressure of the fingers; and the cembalo (which eventually adopted the triangular shape of its ancestor, the psalterium) whose louder, but monotonously uniform, tone had a reedy quality due to the fact that its strings were plucked by quills. This instrument, better known as the harpsichord, had a great vogue in Italy, France and England during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; while the clavichord found more favour in Germany.

These "secular" keyboard instruments inevitably attracted the organists who, at first, instinctively transferred to the clavichord and cembalo the technique and the forms that had been inspired by their ecclesiastical instrument. Consequently, the instrumental works of the early Venetian school: the *ricercare*, *capricci* and *toccatas* of Willaert, Buus, Gabrieli and Merulo, were published as being suitable for either organ or cembalo. The claims of the cembalo to individual treatment were, however, soon recognized, as witness Diruta's *Dialogue on the True Manner of Playing Quilled Instruments* ("Strumenti a Penna") which was printed in Venice in 1593.

Gradually, the secular instruments broke free from the influence of the organ and already in the sixteenth century, Parabosco and Padovano, the famous organists of San Marco who were also noted for their virtuosity on the cembalo, began to seek a distinctive style for this instrument. In their efforts to find suitable secular material, cembalo composers borrowed dance forms from the lutenists; and in transcribing this music, they incidentally took over some of the "tablature" or lute notation signs and adapted them for general instrumental use.

The development of cembalo music begun by the Venetians, was carried further by the Roman organists. Frescobaldi, in particular, introduced innovations which stimulated the creation of secular forms. Most of his cembalo music was written in his new thematic, or variation style; or else based on dance themes which he worked out contrapuntally. The French musician, André Maugars, who wrote so enthusiastically of the Oratorios of Carissimi, was equally impressed by the beauty and novelty of Frescobaldi's cembalo music. After hearing him play, Maugars wrote: "the great Frescobaldi produced endless new effects on his cembalo. It is not without reason that the organist of St. Peter's enjoys such great celebrity in Europe. In order to appreciate his deep science, one must hear his *toccatas*, which are full of delicate details and of marvellously ingenious ideas." After Frescobaldi, Pasquini—the last great representative of the Roman organ school—brought the development of cembalo music a stage further; his works have a freer, more distinctive character.

Ever since Monteverdi's day, the cembalo had also been used as an orchestral instrument; chiefly for providing the *basso continuo* accompaniment to the recitatives in operas, cantatas and oratorios—a rôle that this instrument continued to fill down to fairly recent times. Frequently, the composer himself presided at the cembalo and improvised the accompaniment to his own figured bass.

During this epoch of experiments in technique and form, the innovations

introduced into one type of music were apt to be quickly adopted in other branches. Taking advantage of the more highly organized style of composition evolved by the seventeenth century violinists, the cembalists—who had hitherto imitated vocal, organ or lute styles—now borrowed the plan of the violin sonata. And eventually, it was the harpsichord and piano composers who perfected the sonata form which is the basic foundation of classical symphonic and chamber music.

Cembalo literature assumed increasing importance during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; most of the Italian opera composers wrote *toccatas*, *capricci* or *fantasias* for the instrument, or used it in combination with strings in their early attempts at chamber music. Amongst those who catered for the cembalo were the Venetians: Marcello, Galuppi and Alberti[1]; composers like: Quagliati, Michangelo Rossi, Pasquini, Gasparini, Zipoli, whose activities linked them to the Roman school; and the Neapolitans: Greco, Durante, Porpora, Leo and Logroscino. But it was only when a composer who was also a remarkable virtuoso concentrated on the creation of an idiom and a style suited to the qualities of his instrument, that cembalo music reached artistic maturity. This was the notable achievement of Alessandro Scarlatti's son, Domenico.

In accordance with the musical traditions of the seventeenth century, Domenico Scarlatti had been trained to be an opera composer. But during the years he spent in Rome, where he studied with Pasquini, he had also acquired exceptional skill on the cembalo. Eventually, his technical virtuosity, in conjunction with the adverse conditions which prevailed in the operatic world of both Naples and Rome in the early eighteenth century, caused Domenico to abandon opera and devote himself entirely to his instrument. He became the first harpsichord virtuoso of international fame; the forerunner of the great pianists whose vogue began a century later with Liszt.

Soon after the Scarlatti family had abandoned Naples on account of the War of the Spanish Succession (1702-1714), Alessandro realized that there was no hope of a career for his son in Rome; so, in 1705, he sent him to Venice where music still flourished. On his way north, Domenico gave concerts in various towns. In Florence, he paid his respects to the Duke of Tuscany, himself a good harpsichord player, and the only reigning prince who was sufficiently interested in music to be worth cultivating. Domenico brought the Duke a letter from Alessandro who wrote of his son: "He is an eagle whose wings have grown. I have removed him by force from Naples . . . and I send him away from Rome also, since Rome has no roof to shelter music, which lives here in beggary."

But Duke Ferdinando de' Medici did not appreciate the genius of either of the Scarlatti. Perhaps Domenico's style might have developed on somewhat different lines if he had found employment at the Tuscan Court. For

[1] This composer popularized the use of the monotonous broken chord accompaniment, to become known as the *basso Alberti*, which was such a feature of eighteenth and nineteenth century music.

the famous Medici collection of musical instruments, which included various types of cembalo, was then in charge of Bartolomeo Cristofori of Padua who, in the course of his experiments, hit upon the idea of replacing the quills of the cembalo by hammers: thus inventing the piano. This new instrument—on which loud or soft tones could be produced at will by varied pressure of the fingers—was christened by Cristofori: the Forte-piano or the Piano-forte.[1]

From Tuscany, Domenico went on to Venice and spent a couple of years there studying composition and perfecting his knowledge of the cembalo as a pupil of Gasparini, who was then one of the masters at the Venetian Conservatoire of the Pietà. He met Handel there and returned with him to Rome. It was also in Venice, some two years later, that Domenico Scarlatti made the acquaintance of a musician who was to remain his life-long friend and disciple, namely Thomas Roseingrave of Dublin. The account of his meeting with Domenico—which Burney records vividly in his *History of Music*—leaves no doubt as to Scarlatti's remarkable virtuosity.

Roseingrave, who was present one day at an Accademia held at the house of a Venetian nobleman, was invited to "favour the company with a *toccata*," and obligingly complied. Burney gives Roseingrave's account of the sequel as follows: "A grave young man dressed in black and in a black wig, who had stood in one corner of the room, very quiet and attentive, while Roseingrave played, being asked to sit down to the harpsichord, when he began to play, Rosy said he thought ten hundred devils had been at the instrument—he never heard such passages of execution before . . . If he had been in sight of any instrument with which to have done the deed, he should have cut off his own fingers." Roseingrave learned that this phenomenal virtuoso was Domenico Scarlatti; he followed him to Rome and remained his inseparable companion during the rest of his stay in Italy.

For several years after Alessandro Scarlatti's return to Naples, Domenico remained in Rome as "Maestro di Cappella" and opera composer to Queen Maria Casimiri of Poland. Like most musicians of that day, his talents were versatile and he had been trained in several branches of his art. He held the post of choir-master at St. Peter's for a few months in 1715; from there, he probably went to London, where he was appointed harpsichord player to the orchestra of the Italian Opera. Scarlatti's next post definitely determined the course of his career for the remainder of his life. This was his appointment as musician to the Court of Portugal and harpsichord teacher to the Infanta Maria Barbara of Braganza. When his pupil married the Prince of the Asturias, in 1728, Scarlatti accompanied her to Madrid, where he lived for the next thirty years, devoting himself almost exclusively to the composition of harpsichord music.

[1] Partly because the new instrument was in certain technical respects inferior to the older harpsichord, partly because it demanded a change of touch and technique, Domenico Scarlatti and his contemporaries continued to play on the more brilliant, if monotonous, harpsichord whose popularity remained undiminished until the close of the eighteenth century.

Scarlatti's works became quickly diffused, thanks to the zeal of Roseingrave who published forty-two of Domenico's *Suites and Lessons* in London in 1739, and another series of *sonatas* later. He also made his friend's music known by playing it at concerts, and even performed it during the intervals, at operatic performances. The *Dublin Journal* for January 1753, announced that "the opera, *Phaedra and Hippolitus* of Thomas Roseingrave, will be performed at the Music Hall at Fishamble Street . . . Between the acts, Mr. Roseingrave will perform Scarlatti's *Lessons* on the Harpsichord."

Scarlatti's celebrity as a virtuoso and composer gave him a widespread influence: he became the acknowledged authority on cembalo music. His art was based on an intimate knowledge of the capacity of his instrument. Since the harpsichord did not lend itself to slow, sustained effects, Scarlatti exploited its inherent qualities of lightness and brilliance by making considerable use of such devices as: rapid running passages, ornaments, wide jumps, passages in thirds and sixths; and by crossing the hands, he achieved novel effects that delighted his contemporaries.

As regards style, the most characteristic quality of Scarlatti's compositions is their verve and brilliance, due to a rhythmic vitality in which some see a Spanish inspiration, others the influence of his native Naples. In the domain of form, Domenico Scarlatti was a great pioneer. He had inherited his father's structural sense and his ingenuity in exploiting the rhythmic possibilities of a theme; and Domenico's little one-movement sonatas contain in miniature the principal material of the classical piano sonata. His division of the movement into two sections, his key contrasts, the dissection and repetition of his single theme, his rhythmic changes and unexpected modulations, prepare the way for the modern piano forms; announce Haydn and Philip Emmanuel Bach; foreshadow the vast developments of Beethoven.

During the eighteenth century, a number of other Italian composers wrote for the harpsichord, notably those who specialized in instrumental music, chief amongst them being: Sammartini of Milan, Padre Martini of Bologna, the Neapolitan Pier Domenico Paradisi, and the Tuscan Boccherini who, like Domenico Scarlatti, eventually settled in Madrid.

The piano had meanwhile been gaining ground, as its mechanism was improved by various German makers during the course of the eighteenth century; and it was German and Austrian composers who were to produce the bulk of our classical piano literature. But long before Beethoven devoted his attention to the *Hammerklavier*, the Roman Muzio Clementi, had written the first real piano music: his sonatas, *Opus 2*, published in 1773 in London, which was to be the principal field of Clementi's activities.[1]

Italy's achievements in the domain of secular keyboard music may be said, however, to have culminated in Domenico Scarlatti's characteristic little masterpieces. Like all the genuine art of the past, his music has survived because it possesses the qualities of spontaneity, vitality and genius.

[1] The style of this founder of piano technique was further developed by his famous pupils: Cramer and Field.

CHAPTER X

THE CLOSE OF A GREAT PERIOD VERDI AND THE PAST

A PORTENT of the waning of Italy's musical supremacy may be seen in the fact that three important Italian instrumental composers of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries lived for the greater part of their lives, and died, abroad: Domenico Scarlatti and Boccherini, in Madrid; Clementi, in London. And Paris, then the most brilliant capital in the world, became a centre of attraction for Italian opera composers.

By the mid-eighteenth century, Italy's creative activity had diminished noticeably. There was an end to the continuous, vigorous, development that had been witnessed in various Italian towns for more than two centuries. This decline in musical vitality is attributable, partly to the emigration of outstanding composers who would, under normal conditions, have been the leaders of new movements at home; and partly to the narrowing of the Italian musical horizon almost exclusively to opera, which had the effect of crippling national inspiration and initiative.

The political upheavals that convulsed Italy during the nineteenth century further disorganized musical life. Whereas the frequent, but usually localized, wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had not hindered Italy's marvellous development, the widespread revolutionary movements of the nineteenth century brought about a complete political transformation; and the musical activities which had been intimately bound up with the life of the local courts and states, inevitably came to an end with them.

Whatever the fundamental reason for the decline in native inspiration, the fact remains that, except for the appearance of a few isolated geniuses, Italy, at the close of the eighteenth century, lapsed into a comparative silence after having been for centuries the chief source of European art music.

Under the influence of German romanticism, music began to develop characteristics utterly alien to the Italian mentality. During the first half of the nineteenth century, however, the Neapolitan style of opera still retained its fascination both for the Italian composers and for the European audiences that had grown up in this tradition. Its continued vogue was largely due to the wonderful virtuosity of the many famous singers, trained in the Italian method, who still held possession of the principal opera houses of Europe and enjoyed a phenomenal popularity. Chief amongst them were: the Italians, Pasta, Grisi, Rubini, Tamburini, Lablache, Mario; the Spaniard, Garcia, and his daughter, Malibran.

Though we are not here concerned with the activities of the many composers who carried on the conventional Neapolitan tradition, a glance

must be given to those great celebrities, Cherubini, Rossini, Donizetti, Bellini who, if they did not revolutionize the art or inspire new movements, won a world-wide fame, and shed a bright lustre on the name of Italy in the early nineteenth century.

Their operas were popular throughout Europe; but it was in Paris, now the centre of a brilliant musical life, that these musicians celebrated their greatest triumphs. Cherubini, whom Beethoven ranked above all contemporary opera composers, achieved such success there that he was appointed Director of the Paris Conservatoire, whereupon he practically abandoned composition.

The genius and originality of Rossini made him for long one of the principal figures in Paris musical circles. He, if any, could have infused fresh life into the *Opera Buffa* and given a new direction to Italian opera, if he had not lapsed into a sudden silence when still at the height of his powers. Even so, his *Barber of Seville* gained him an enduring fame; in spite of the epoch-making triumphs of his young rival, Wagner, whose revolutionary treatment of operatic form Rossini lived to witness.

Donizetti captured Paris with his *Lucia di Lammermoor*; and Bellini, the luscious music of whose *La Sonnambula* and *Norma* we have seen revived, produced his *I Puritani* in Paris, in 1834. He died in France a few months later.

These famous composers belonged rather to the big cosmopolitan world than to their native Italy. For, though the La Scala Theatre at Milan, which had been in existence since 1778, was then giving the splendid productions of Italian opera for which it is noted to this day, Italy was no longer the centre of gravity of the musical world. The memory of her former greatness was beginning to fade in the mid-eighteenth century when Verdi brought his country fresh glory.

With Verdi, who first accepted and then disowned the conventional Neapolitan form, the influence of this last famous Italian "school" may be said to have ended. Apart from his importance as the outstanding personality in Italian music in the second half of the nineteenth century, Verdi has for us a special significance, as the champion of classical Italian music, whose beauties were at that time almost forgotten.

Verdi's national instinct was evident from the beginning of his career. Though the influence of Germany was now supreme, Verdi—to use his own words—refused to renounce his "musical nationality" to "commit the musical crime" of imitating Wagner. While avoiding the more conventional formulæ of the Neapolitan school, he was determined to express himself in the Italian manner; he consequently made Song the principal element in his operas, at a period when most European composers, following the lead of Wagner, gave the orchestra pre-eminence.

Late in life—at the age of seventy-four—Verdi had the courage to discard the arbitrary plan of the Neapolitan opera and to revolutionize his style, for the sake of attaining greater realism and dramatic truth. He adopted in his *Othello* a freer, more homogeneous treatment, which he perfected a few

years later in *Falstaff*: the masterpiece of an octogenarian who was still capable of inspiring his contemporaries.[1]

With his clear insight and long musical experience, Verdi realized that drastic reforms were needed to raise Italian music out of the stagnation into which it had sunk. A fervent admirer of his country's past achievements, he believed that the salvation of Italian music lay in a return to the classical ideals of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Verdi expressed this conviction very tellingly, in 1892, in a letter to Hans von Bülow. "If northern and southern artists have different tendencies," wrote Verdi, "well, then, let them *be* different. As Wagner has so truly said, we should all preserve our own national characteristics. You are fortunate in being the sons of Bach. And what of us? We, too, the sons of Palestrina, once had a great school . . . one that was really our own. Now it has degenerated, and is threatened with ruin. Oh! if we could only begin all over again!"

In similar terms, Verdi, on many occasions, extolled the Italian music of the past; and paid homage to the noble art of Palestrina, Frescobaldi, Monteverdi, Carissimi, Corelli.

[1] Verdi's freshness of mentality is akin to that displayed, more than two centuries earlier, by his musical "ancestor," Monteverdi who, at the same advanced age, created, in his *Incoronazione di Poppea*, a new style which was the basis of Italian Opera.

PART III

INFLUENCE

CHAPTER I

INFLUENCE OF ITALIAN MUSIC IN GERMANY

When Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven had established the indisputable supremacy of German music, the Italian classical composers suffered a long neglect. But, if their music was set aside, their influence was not obliterated: the Italian music of the great period left an indelible imprint on the art music of all European countries. Nowhere, however, is this influence more apparent than in the magnificent national art of Germany, whose initial development owed much to the inspiration of the Italian music of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

It is interesting to note how Italian musical elements, transplanted to German soil, helped to produce a purely German art.

As we have seen, it was from Venice that the first currents of Italian music began to flow northwards in the course of the sixteenth century. Thither came young German musicians—many sent at the expense of their local princes—to study with Andrea or Giovanni Gabrieli, with Zarlino or Merulo.

The first noteworthy German musician to be trained in Venice was Hans Leo Hassler of Nuremberg, who became a pupil of Andrea Gabrieli in 1584, and had as his fellow-student his master's celebrated nephew, Giovanni. Later, in Frankfurt and Augsburg, Hassler made a name both as organist and as composer of the *cantatas* and *madrigals* that were so characteristic of the Venetian school. These new forms were quickly diffused in the north; the music of Hassler and of his friend, Giovanni Gabrieli, being collected and printed in Nuremberg, in 1615, by Georg Grüber, another of Andrea Gabrieli's German pupils.

The Venetian style was carried still further north by the famous Dutch organist, Jan Pieter Sweelinck of Amsterdam, who learnt his art in Venice from either Zarlino or Giovanni Gabrieli. Sweelinck's own important development of the organ *fugue* reached Germany through his Saxon pupil, Scheidt, and formed the basis of the North German organ style. Thus, gradually, the Italian innovations in form and technique spread throughout Germany; and her early composers probably owed their keen interest in instrumental music partly to the influence of the Venetian school.

While German students travelled south to study with the Venetian masters, many Italians went north to take up posts as organists and choir directors at the more important German and Austrian courts. One of the earliest of these musical emigrants was Annibale Padovano, the organ virtuoso of San Marco, Venice, who entered the service of the Archduke Charles of Austria, in 1566. And during the last decade of the sixteenth century, the learned Padre Lodovico Zacconi of Pesaro, well-known as a

writer on the theory of music, occasionally left his Venetian monastery to organize and direct the choirs, now of the Duke of Bavaria, now of the Austrian Archduke; for Munich and Vienna were rivals in the cultivation of music, and at both courts the Italian taste prevailed.

The coming of the great Orlando di Lasso to Munich in 1556—when he was appointed Maestro di Cappella to Duke Albert the Fifth of Bavaria, a post he occupied till his death thirty years later—had brought Munich under an influence more Italian than Flemish; for di Lasso, having spent most of his early life in Italy—chiefly at Mantua, Naples and Rome—was deeply imbued with the spirit of Renaissance culture.

A still more active musical intercourse between Italy and Germany began in the early seventeenth century. The principal agent of Italian influence at that period was the Saxon composer, Heinrich Schütz, whom Landgraf Maurice of Hesse-Cassel sent to Venice, in 1609, to study with Giovanni Gabrieli. In the artistic atmosphere of Venice, where music had rapidly developed during the sixteenth century, Schütz acquired the most progressive theories of that day. Many years later, in the preface to his *Symphonies*—inspired by those of Gabrieli—Schütz acknowledged his indebtedness to the master who had shared with him the "golden treasures" of his art. "Giovanni Gabrieli!" he exclaims, "ye immortal gods, what a man!"

As choir director to the Elector of Saxony, Schütz gave a considerable impetus to music in Dresden during the first half of the seventeenth century; and, as a composer, he was one of the chief inspirers of the future German school. His musical idiom, in which the old German contrapuntal style was closely blended with the new Italian formulæ, contained all the essential elements out of which Bach was to create his noble art. Like his great successor, Schütz was most at home in sacred music; but he also experimented in the new secular forms which Italy was then developing.

Having obtained leave of absence from the Elector of Saxony, in order to seek further "enlightenment" and "to perfect his art," Schütz returned to Venice, in 1629, some years after the death of Giovanni Gabrieli, with a view to studying at close quarters Monteverdi's harmonic innovations and his new operatic style. This journey bore fruit in Schütz's opera *Dafne*,[1] the first music drama written to a German text. Schütz's activities, which augured so well for the development of German music, were interrupted by the Thirty Years' War. Since all musical life in Dresden ceased for the time being, he took a position at the Danish Court and remained there several years.

Meanwhile, Italy continued to radiate musical influence from her various flourishing centres. Venice, close to the northern frontier, had attracted the first German musicians; next, Rome became the principal school. The influence of Palestrina was, however, more indirect than that of the Gabrieli; his music was made known in Germany chiefly by his

[1] The text was an adaptation of Rinuccini's drama *Dafne*, which had been set to music by the Florentines, Peri and Caccini.

Roman disciples of the following generation, many of whom became choir-masters at the German and Austrian courts.

Cifra, one of the first Roman composers to go north, entered the service of the Austrian Archduke Charles, in 1622. Cifra's pupil, Foggia—who had also studied at the School of Bernardo Nanini—obtained his first appointment from the Elector of Cologne, subsequently holding posts at the courts of Munich and Vienna before he returned to Rome, where he eventually became choir-master of Santa Maria Maggiore. The Roman school was represented at Vienna some years later by Orazio Benevoli; while Benevoli's pupil, Ercole Bernabei and his son, Antonio, directed the music at the Munich court for over fifty years. Through these men and their Italian and German disciples, the influence of the Roman school spread all over central Europe: northwards, to Hanover, Belgium, Holland; eastwards, to Poland.

Attracted by the musical prestige of Rome, foreign students flocked thither throughout the seventeenth century to study with Palestrina's famous successors: Frescobaldi, Carissimi, Pasquini and Corelli. The most noteworthy of these northern musicians were two protégés of Ferdinand the Third of Austria: Frohberger, whom the Emperor sent to study with Frescobaldi and who later became famous as court organist and composer; and Kaspar von Kerll, a pupil of both Frescobaldi and Carissimi, who filled important positions at the Bavarian and Austrian courts.

Many of Schütz's disciples completed their training in Italy; among them Christoph Bernhard, a musician at the court of the Elector of Saxony, who went to Rome to study the new *oratorio* style with Carissimi. Another of Carissimi's German pupils, the Bayreuth court organist, Johann Phillip Krieger, studied opera with Pasquini, and was one of the first German composers to adopt the Italian monodic style. The Elector-Archbishop of Salzburg—a town where the Italian influence had always been strong—also sent his organist, the Alsatian, Georg Muffat, to study at the school of Pasquini; and Corelli was another of Muffat's many masters.

Those German musicians who studied the organ with either Frescobaldi or Pasquini also acquired a knowledge of the Italian cembalo style which thus naturally influenced German clavichord music. During the same period, the initial developments in violin music were made known in Germany by two Italian musicians who were amongst the first to specialize in this instrument. Biagio Marini of Brescia, the first composer to write distinctive violin music, lived at the court of Heidelberg from 1624 to 1641; and the violinist, Carlo Farina of Mantua, was brought to Dresden at about the same period by Schütz. So permeated did Germany become with the foreign influence, that the Italian innovations were eagerly adopted and propagated even by those German musicians who had not come into personal contact with Italy; notably by Schütz's contemporary, the composer and writer, Michael Praetorius, whose famous *Syntagma Musicum* throws such valuable light on musical conditions in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Meanwhile, the opera had swept all before it in Italy at the beginning

of the seventeenth century. The Austrian and German princes, who were frequent guests at the Italian courts, were greatly impressed by the magnificent performances of the new music dramas which they witnessed at the courts of Florence and Mantua; and later, when Venice became the chief centre for opera, many of them had their private boxes at one or other of the Venetian theatres.

In this domain, Italy was to remain for long unrivalled. German composers were at first disinclined to attempt the operatic form. For, apart from the lack of trained native singers, they were hampered by the immaturity of the German language which did not yet lend itself to musical treatment. Except for the morality play, *Scelewig*, which the organist Staden produced in Nuremberg in 1644, Schütz's *Dafne* had remained an isolated example of the early German music drama; and, in both these works, though the text was German, the music was modelled on the Italian style. Such rudimentary experiments did not attract the German nobles, accustomed to the brilliant Italian productions which it was their ambition to imitate at home. The Thirty Years' War prevented any important musical developments in Germany during the first half of the seventeenth century; but, no sooner was peace restored, than the German princes began to organize their court life on a more elaborate footing, in imitation of their Italian compeers; and one of the first steps they took was to import entire opera companies from Italy for their entertainment.

The success of the Italian opera in Germany was phenomenal. So enduring was its popularity in Munich, Dresden, Vienna, Berlin and at most of the smaller courts that, for over a hundred years, Italian music reigned supreme in Germany, while the early German music was despised and neglected.

The most cultured German state in the seventeenth century was Bavaria, whose rulers were connected by marriage with some of the great Italian families. Henrietta Adelaide of Savoy, wife of the reigning Duke of Bavaria, introduced the first company of Italian singers to Munich in 1654, a few years after the close of the Thirty Years' War; and, once established, the Italian opera held its ground there until the end of the eighteenth century. Even when a native composer, like Kaspar von Kerll became assistant director at the Munich opera, there was no change of tendency. This disciple of Carissimi, steeped in the Roman tradition, faithfully imitated the Italian models; to Kerll and his contemporaries, the only cultured style in music was the Italian.

The Roman influence became intensified in Munich when Kerll was succeeded by Ercole Bernabei, who had made his reputation as choir-master of St. John Lateran and St. Peter's. He was accompanied by his pupil, Steffani, a young Italian who, after studying with Kerll in Munich, had been sent by the Elector of Bavaria to perfect his art in Rome. These two excellent musicians and Ercole Bernabei's son, Antonio—who was appointed assistant to his father and eventually succeeded him—brought both church and operatic music to a high level in Munich during the late seventeenth and

early eighteenth century. The War of the Spanish Succession interrupted all musical activity in Bavaria at the opening of the eighteenth century; but, immediately after the declaration of peace in 1714, the Munich court choir and the Italian opera were once more established on their former footing.

Antonio Bernabei was succeeded by several other Italians. The most noteworthy was Ferrandini, whom the Elector of Bavaria sent to Italy in 1753, to collect a new company of singers, with a view to improving the performances at the Munich opera. At that period, however, Italian opera was deteriorating even in its principal strongholds, Venice and Naples; and its reign was nearly over in Germany. Yet, so accustomed was the musical *élite* of Munich to the traditional Italian style, that they resented any innovations, however justified. Thus, Gluck's *Orfeo* was received there with scant favour in 1773; and although Mozart had written one of his early works, *La Finta Giardiniera*, for the Munich opera, his genius was so little appreciated that the Elector refused him an appointment in 1777. But conditions changed a few months later on the accession of the Elector Karl Theodor who was a supporter of German art; and Munich gradually abandoned the exclusive cult of Italian music.

The Dresden Court, which had witnessed such important developments in German music during the directorship of Schütz, was destined, even in his lifetime, to become another stronghold of Italian opera. On Schütz's return to Dresden at the close of the Thirty Years' War, he reorganized the Elector's choir; and amongst the new singers he engaged was an Italian of the name of Bontempi, who soon became a favourite. A few years later Schütz, realizing the impossibility of resisting the Italian musical invasion, relinquished his post as music director to Bontempi. The result was that Italian opera was brought to Dresden two years after its establishment in Munich. It found such favour at the Saxon court that the Venetian composer, Pallavicini, was commissioned to organize a permanent Italian opera, of which he eventually became director. German singers were dismissed from the Court Theatre, and all native musical initiative was stifled; since local composers who wished to obtain a hearing were obliged to write their operas on the Italian model.

The influence of the Italian school remained paramount in Dresden. The magnificent new opera house, opened in 1719, was inaugurated with a series of works by Lotti, the composer himself being brought from Venice to direct them. Italian opera reached its apogee in Dresden during the directorship of Alessandro Scarlatti's German disciple, Adolph Hasse, who was accounted one of the best "Italian" opera composers of that day. During his long sojourn in Italy, Hasse had acquired great skill in writing for the voice; and he had an admirable interpreter for his principal female rôles in his wife, the Venetian prima donna, Faustina Bordone. Thanks to the talents of the Hasse couple, the Dresden Italian opera remained for thirty years one of the most brilliant in Germany. Then, in the mid-eighteenth century, musical developments were once more cut short by war—the Seven Years' War.

When it ended, in 1763, the Saxon treasury was so depleted that the opera subsidy had to be cancelled; and thus Italian opera died out in Dresden.

Vienna remained for an equally long period under the musical sway of Italy. When the Emperor Ferdinand the Third undertook the re-organization of his court music at the end of the Thirty Years' War, he re-established the famous Imperial Choir, engaged many good instrumentalists, and inaugurated Italian opera in Vienna with a performance of Cavalli's *Egisto*. A number of well-known Italian musicians were connected with the Imperial opera during the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Cesti was appointed director in 1668; Bononcini was court composer during the first decade of the eighteenth century; Caldara, as assistant music director, wrote sixty-nine works for the Vienna opera; and Conti spent most of his life in the service of the Austrian Emperors. The Italian influence became strengthened when the post of court poet was given to the Italian, Metastasio, whose dramas were used as *libretti* by such celebrated eighteenth century composers as: Vinci, Caldara, Fux, Hasse, Gluck, Pergolesi and Mozart.

In common with all their German colleagues, the Vienna opera composers wrote in the Italian manner; even Fux, the famous writer of theoretical works, was no exception; and when, in the middle of the eighteenth century, Italian opera in Vienna showed signs of deterioration, it was another German composer, Gluck, who infused it temporarily with new life. As a music student in Vienna, Gluck had acquired a knowledge of the accepted operatic methods from Caldara, Conti and Fux; he became still more deeply grounded in the Italian style during the four years he spent with Sammartini in Milan. Gluck's music, especially in its melodic quality, retained to the end the stamp of this early Italian influence; yet, by his subsequent operatic reforms, he was destined to hasten the downfall of Italian opera both in France and Germany.

Gluck saw the need of correcting the abuses which Benedetto Marcello had satirized in his *Teatro alla Moda*, and of eliminating the artificial musical conventions that paralysed the dramatic action in opera. He began by simplifying his *arias* and omitting all unnecessary ornaments and *cadenzas* which only served to show off the vocal agility of the singers. Modelling himself on the Greek drama, Gluck aimed at maintaining a logical unity throughout his operas; he used his music to add colour, light and shade to the poetic text and concentrated the emotion in the principal dramatic climaxes.

Gluck embodied these reforms in his *Orfeo*. This work aroused such enthusiasm on its production in Vienna, in 1762, that conventional Italian opera soon lost prestige in Austria and Germany; and gradually a place of honour was given to the new works of the native school, represented by Gluck's later operas and Mozart's masterpieces.

It was also in Austria, and at the same period, that the instrumental forms began to be developed on broader lines. While Gluck was reaping his first laurels in Vienna, an obscure young Viennese musician, named Joseph Haydn, was endeavouring to acquire the musical education that was

hard to come by without money or patrons. At the house of the Court Poet, Metastasio, young Haydn had the good fortune to meet the Neapolitan composer and singing-teacher, Porpora, and gladly consented to become accompanist at his singing lessons, in order to acquire a more intimate knowledge of the vocal style in which the Italians were such experts. Later, in the retirement of Eisenstadt, as director of Prince Esterhazy's orchestra, Haydn gained a wider experience in conducting the works of the best Italian instrumental composers of that day. He adopted many of their ideas, developed their musical material, and gave more shape to the forms they had outlined; thus creating, with the sure instinct of genius, the framework on which all the great German classical composers were to plan their instrumental works.

The Italian musical influence was not limited to southern Germany. It spread to many northern towns, notably to Hanover, Berlin and Hamburg. Hanover is remembered in musical history to-day chiefly because of its connection with Handel. But, for twenty-five years before the arrival of Handel, operatic and vocal chamber music had been ably cultivated there by Agostino Steffani, who had left Munich to become Kappellmeister to the Elector of Hanover. Steffani, having been trained in the traditions of Palestrina and Carissimi, had an excellent influence on the development of music in the two German towns in which he worked. Though most successful as a composer for cantatas and vocal duets, Steffani also wrote a number of operas for the Hanover Theatre, many of which were, however, never ascribed to him. This was due to the fact that Steffani, a shrewd and cultured man of the world, was employed by the Elector in a diplomatic capacity when Hanover became involved in political complications at the end of the seventeenth century. And the compositions Steffani wrote at that period bore the name of his secretary, Piva, to safeguard the dignity of the Elector's Envoy Extraordinary.

When Handel came to Hanover in 1710, Steffani, recognizing his genius, decided to resign from the post of music director in his favour. Handel's appointment cannot, however, be regarded as the triumph of native music over the Italian. For, although Handel's early training had been that of a German organist, he had later studied with Bononcini in Berlin, and had acquired a still more intimate knowledge of the Italian style during the years he spent in Italy where his cantatas and operas were accepted as belonging to the "Italian" school. Indeed, it was from Bononcini, Alessandro Scarlatti and Steffani that Handel adopted many of the characteristic elements which became an integral part of his musical style.

Italian opera in Hanover practically came to an end on Handel's appointment as court musician. Having obtained leave of absence, in order to produce some of his works in London, Handel found such an excellent opening there that he decided to make London his headquarters—with far-seeing, almost prophetic wisdom; for the importance of Hanover as a music centre ceased a few years later when the Elector succeeded to the throne of England as George the First.

Berlin in its turn came under the spell of Italian music. No sooner had the Kingdom of Prussia been firmly established by Frederick the First, in 1700, than Italian opera—now regarded as an indispensable adjunct of court life—was introduced to Berlin. All musical institutions languished during the reign of the next king, Frederick William, who was so hostile to music that his son, the future Frederick the Great, had to cultivate his musical talent in secret and enroll his teacher, the famous flautist, Quantz, nominally as a valet in his household. But, on the accession of Frederick the Great, music came into her own again. This king was a keen patron of Italian opera and took particular delight in the works of Hasse and of his own court composer, Karl Heinrich Graun, who had been so perfectly trained in the Venetian style during his student years in Dresden, that his operas could hardly be distinguished from those of his Venetian models. Frederick the Great himself provided Graun with several *libretti*, writing the text in French and then getting it translated into Italian, still the only recognized "operatic" language, even for German composers. On being sent by the king to Italy to engage a new opera company for Berlin, Graun brought back a quartet of some of the most famous Italian singers of the day, so that the operatic performances at the Prussian Court were second to none in Germany.

Frederick's passion for the flute gave him a certain interest in instrumental music in general. He engaged as his accompanist, Johann Sebastian Bach's son, Philip Emmanuel, who contributed so much to the development of the German clavichord sonata. Philip Emmanuel and his Italian-trained brother, Johann Christian—well-known as an opera composer—were then much more celebrated than their father. Yet, the great genius, whose music was only to be appreciated by future generations, was received with all honour when he visited the Berlin court. When Frederick the Great showed the old Leipzig organist his collection of clavichords and early pianos, he had an opportunity of hearing Johann Sebastian play some of that marvellous music of his which, though intensely German in conception and feeling, is yet full of Italian elements. For, the great German utilized perforce much technical material that was of Italian origin; and he had absorbed something of the melodious suavity that distinguished the great Italians with whose music he was familiar, since it was often performed in Weimar and the other German towns where Bach lived during his early career.

His son Philip Emmanuel, known as Bach of Berlin, came as a secular musician into more direct contact with the musical influence of eighteenth century Italy. His clavichord sonatas which herald the piano sonatas of Beethoven, show traces of the manner of Domenico Scarlatti; and his division of the material into three movements—one of his most important contributions to instrumental form—was probably suggested to him by the plan of the Italian Overture and violin sonata.

Music continued to flourish in Berlin until the outbreak of the Seven Years' War. From that time onwards, as the king's attention was entirely

focused on State affairs, music became neglected. Lacking the royal patronage, the Italian opera decayed rapidly; Frederick the Great even lost interest in his flute-playing, and his court cembalist, Philip Emmanuel Bach, left Berlin and settled in Hamburg.

Hamburg, one of the few important German cities that escaped the ravages of the Thirty Years' War, was one of the earliest strongholds of national music. In opposition to the local Italian opera, established there since the middle of the seventeenth century, a group of wealthy Hamburg merchants organized a national operatic scheme, and opened a German opera house in 1678. The first work produced there was a musical play by Theile, a pupil of Schütz. The undertaking was carried on for many years, in spite of serious obstacles. The chief drawbacks were the scarcity of trained German singers and the lack of suitable *libretti;* coarse, farcical texts, which offended the cultured patrons of opera, being often chosen with a view to attracting a popular audience. The failure of the project was not due to any lack of talent on the part of the composers concerned. Indeed, Reinhard Keiser brought the Hamburg German opera a brief period of brilliant success. But it proved impossible to maintain a permanent high standard in spite of the efforts of Matheson (under whom the youthful Handel[1] acted as violinist and assistant director), and of his successor, Telemann. The latter, by his adoption of the *intermezzo* form, helped to popularize the Italian style, and paved the way for the triumph of the Italian opera company which took over the German opera house in Hamburg in 1740; thus temporarily paralysing national operatic developments.

Of the many small German states which favoured Italian opera, one of the most noteworthy in the history of music was the Electorate of Mannheim. Interesting developments in instrumental—particularly in orchestral—music took place there in the second half of the eighteenth century, when a local school of music was founded. The Mannheim musicians showed a tendency to abandon classical ideals in favour of an expressive, impressionistic style—a musical revolution, prophetic of the romantic movement, that had already been foreshadowed in the music of Vivaldi, Sammartini, Galuppi, Tartini and other Italian composers.

An interesting personality, long connected with the Court of Mannheim, was Abbé Vogler. He was sent to Bologna by the Elector to study with Padre Martini—the last great representative and champion of the classical Italian tradition. But Vogler did not find the learned Franciscan's contrapuntal style to his taste; so he sought for exponents of the new harmonic theories in Padua and Rome before returning to Mannheim to take charge of the Elector's music.[2]

Attracted by the increasing musical fame of this little State, Mozart —after his dismissal from the service of the Elector-Archbishop of Salzburg—

[1] At Hamburg, Handel produced his first opera, *Almira,* which was sung partly to Italian, partly to German words.

[2] Later, in Vienna, Vogler had among his pupils, Karl Maria von Weber, the creator of German Romantic Opera.

went to Mannheim in 1777, in the hope of obtaining a position there. But he was as unsuccessful in Mannheim as in Munich; at neither court could the young genius find the patronage he so sorely needed.

German music had reached a remarkable development by Mozart's day, yet there is no German composer in whom the Italian influence is more evident. It was no doubt natural that his operas written to Italian *libretti* should reflect a spirit that was inherent in the language of his texts; and that his early works, which followed the plan of the long-sanctioned Italian models, should retain many typical musical characteristics. But, even when Mozart undertook to write a purely German opera to a German text, as in his *Magic Flute*, he created a masterpiece which, for all its originality, shows many points of similarity with the music of Alessandro Scarlatti, of Leo and Paisiello.

This kinship with the southern school was inevitable. Apart from the Italian influence which Mozart had absorbed from the teaching of Padre Martini's pupil, Johann Christian Bach, in London, and apart from his own subsequent musical experiences in Italy, he had lived in this atmosphere from childhood. For Mozart's native Salzburg had been for centuries in close contact with Italian life. In their church music, the composers at the Court of the Elector-Archbishops had inclined towards the Palestrinian style; and when in due course Italian opera was introduced, well-known Italian composers, amongst them Caldara, were engaged at the Court of Salzburg so that the whole musical atmosphere was permeated with the Italian spirit.

Opera was not the only form which Italians fostered in Germany at this period. Many celebrated violinists, following in the footsteps of those early pioneers, Farina and Marini, brought the mature violin technique and violin music of the eighteenth-century Italy to Germany.

Vivaldi, later to become one of the great musical celebrities of Venice, was in the service of the Landgraf of Hesse-Darmstadt, at the beginning of the eighteenth century. His German pupil, Treu, who studied with him in Venice, taught the Italian style of violin playing in Breslau, where he was appointed Kappellmeister. Another of Vivaldi's pupils, Evaristo dell' Abaco, a well-known composer of violin sonatas, was musician to the Elector of Bavaria. Veracini was employed at the Court of Dresden from 1717 to 1722. Tartini and his pupil, Nardini, visited various parts of Germany; and Tartini's technical methods were spread in Germany by Johann Graun, a brother of Frederick the Great's opera composer, who had studied for several years at Tartini's "School of the Nations" at Padua. Consequently, both the technique and the compositions of the Italian violin school inevitably influenced subsequent developments in Germany.

Italy also passed on to Germany many types of vocal chamber music. The *cantata* and the *oratorio*, imported to Germany contemporaneously with opera, found a favourable soil there and received at the hands of German composers a new characteristic style of treatment. The *cantata* form inspired some of Bach's finest vocal music; and Handel, on abandoning opera,

devoted himself chiefly to the *oratorio*, which he amplified, making it the imposing form which is nowadays associated with his name.

Another type of sacred music for which Germany became famous, namely *Passion Music*, is also Italian in origin. Its descent can be traced through the *oratorios* of Carissimi, back to Roman liturgical music. Its germ is to be found in the chanting of the "Passion Gospels," to which late sixteenth-century Roman composers added polyphonic choruses, known as *turbæ*, which rendered in dramatic guise the exclamations of the Jewish crowd.

In Carissimi's *oratorios*, the narrative recitative was modelled on plain chant. Schütz, the first noteworthy German composer of Passion Music, used a combination of plain chant and German chorale. As time went on, the German composers tended to abandon the Roman chant and write original recitatives of their own; thus gradually developing a distinctive national type of Passion Music which reached its most sublime heights in Bach's great works.

Yet, so strong was the original inspiration that, even in Bach's celebrated *St. Matthew Passion*, the style of both *arias* and recitatives betrays the Italian derivation of this noble form. The musical idiom of Italy left its mark even on that characteristic type of German music.

CHAPTER II

INFLUENCE OF ITALIAN MUSIC IN FRANCE

In France, the sway of Italian music was practically limited to Paris. But, though its sphere of action was more restricted than in Germany, its influence was none the less potent, and made itself felt at an even earlier date. Already in the Middle Ages, frequent intercourse had kept the educated classes in France and Italy aware of the cultural developments which originated now in one country, now in the other.

While the first impetus in the cultivation of church music had come from Rome, Italy had, later on, assimilated the contrapuntal forms which the fourteenth and fifteenth century composers of northern France cultivated in common with their Flemish neighbours. Frenchmen figured among the famous "Netherland" singers and composers for whose services the Italian Renaissance nobles and the Popes contended with the courts of Paris and Burgundy. And when Italy began to develop a distinctive secular music of her own, France was the first foreign country to welcome the exponents of the new style.

Amongst the musicians employed in the household of Francis the First, were players of the lute, cornetto and trombone who, throughout his reign, were regularly recruited from Verona and Mantua. Their performances familiarized the French Court with the simple secular forms then developing in northern Italy; for their repertoire consisted mainly of *Frottole* and *Strambotte*, those primitive part-songs which, thus adapted for instruments, foreshadow that important type, the instrumental *canzone* or *chanson*, soon to become popular in France.

The marriages of two French kings with members of the Medici family, brought Paris into contact with the musical developments of which Florence was the centre during the sixteenth century. As the wife of Henry the Second and later as Queen Dowager, Catherine de' Medici was responsible for the engagement of many Italian musicians at the French court, among them being one of the earliest violinists of note, Baldassarino da Belgioioso, whom she brought to Paris in 1577. Her sons, Charles the Ninth and Henry the Third, who inherited her Italian tastes and her love of music, made every effort to bring the French Court into line with the artistic life of Renaissance Italy.

For Charles the Ninth, Andrea Amati made sets of viols and violins which were still in existence at the time of the French Revolution. This son of the Medici imitated his Florentine relatives by founding an "Académie" in Paris for the cultivation of the classical arts of poetry, music and dancing, in which the Italian influence predominated, especially on the musical side. The Académie assumed greater importance during the reign of Charles's brother,

Henry the Third. On his journey back from Poland to ascend the throne of France, the new king was received with great ceremony in the Italian States through which he passed. At the festivities given in his honour in Venice, Mantua, Florence and Turin, he heard new types of music which so delighted him that it became his ambition to organize similar performances at his court. In his desire to encourage the musical activities of the Académie, Henry the Third had the meetings of that body transferred to his own apartments. But, in spite of the royal patronage, musical developments in France were retarded by the lack of mature native talent. The art that flourished most was the dance; and the principal achievement of the Académie was the creation of the Ballet, which became the favourite type of courtly entertainment in France in the pre-opera period, and remained an important element in French opera.

The Florentine musical movement had made considerable progress by the time France received its next artistic impulse from Italy. When Henry the Fourth of France went to Florence to marry Maria de' Medici, in 1600, the Camerata had already given practical shape to their theories on the music drama: Peri's *Dafne* had been produced with success and the opera was an established fact. The music performed at the magnificent festivals, given in honour of the royal marriage, was composed by Peri, Caccini and Del Cavaliere, the principal composers connected with the new musical movement. An attempt was made a few years later by Maria de' Medici to transplant the opera to Paris. She sent for Caccini—a judicious choice, since the composer and two of his daughters were good singers—and gave him a permanent appointment at the French Court. But Caccini yearned for the musical life at the Medici court and returned to Florence with his family six months later.

The music drama received no encouragement during the reign of Louis the Thirteenth, for this king strongly disapproved of all theatrical performances. His ideas were not, however, shared either by his Queen, Anne of Austria, or by his Minister, Richelieu. The latter was sufficiently curious about the musical developments then taking place in Italy as to send one of his private musicians, the viola player, André Maugars, to Italy to report to him on the state of music there.[1]

After the death of her husband, Anne of Austria had ample opportunity for indulging her musical tastes. Her minister, the Italian Mazarin, took advantage of the minority of Louis the Fourteenth, to bring an Italian opera company to Paris in 1645. A performance of Scarlatti's *La Finta Pazza* was followed by Cavalli's *Egisto*; and so attracted was the Queen Regent by the new music drama that, to please her, Mazarin sent to Italy for more actors and virtuosi. He showed, in fact, such zeal in providing for her entertainment that he was accused of deliberately

[1] Maugars' report: "Response faite à un curieux sur le sentiment de la Musique d'Italie" (1639), supplies us with details concerning Frescobaldi and Carissimi, already quoted.

distracting her attention from State affairs, so that he should be free to govern France as he liked.

Mazarin's operatic schemes were, as we have already seen, furthered by the arrival of the Barberini from Rome in 1645. He brought their best composers, singers and scenery experts to Paris and established Italian opera there on a scale of great magnificence. The climax of ostentatious brilliance was reached at the Palais Royal in 1647, with the production of Luigi Rossi's *Orfeo*. But, in spite of the high standard of the musical performances and the spectacular settings in which the most elaborate machinery was used, the opera was a failure. The courtiers were not sufficiently interested in music to be able to listen for six hours to singing in a language they did not understand; the poor literary standard of the *libretto* was criticized by the intellectuals; and vigorous complaints against the enormous expense of the undertaking were expressed by both the Parliament and the citizens. Soon, a regular campaign against Italian opera was organized, which lasted a century and a half; now smouldering, now breaking out into a violent artistic warfare.

Although the cultured French were loud in their criticisms of the Italian operatic texts, they saw the advantage of thus uniting music to the drama, and were quick to utilize the idea. In 1650, Corneille produced his drama *Andromeda* with incidental music by d'Assoucy. And while Cavalli, the most famous representative of the Venetian school, directed several of his operas in Paris with varying degrees of success, a group of Frenchmen, headed by the poet, Perrin, began to plan the creation of a National French Opera. In 1657, in collaboration with the musician Cambert, Perrin staged the first French work written on operatic lines. This was a musical *Pastorale*, very slight in structure, and consisting mainly of a series of songs.

The marked difference between French and Italian operatic ideals which this work illustrated, was immediately made the subject of a musical satire, the *Ballet de la Raillerie*, by Jean-Baptiste Lully, a young composer of Florentine origin, educated in France, who then held a modest position in the King's Band of Violins. Two years later, Lully, as superintendent of the king's music, had begun to establish the sway which eventually made it possible for him to monopolize the operatic stage. Cavalli left Paris about this time, and Lully managed to have all the other Italian musicians sent away. By means of unscrupulous intrigues, he next rid himself gradually of his French rivals: he bought Perrin's patent, had Cambert's theatre closed, and thus remained sole master of the musical field.

Lully's talents and his intimate knowledge of the French mentality enabled him to give his adopted country a type of music drama so well suited to the national taste that he became the acknowledged founder of the French School of Opera. Abandoning the melodic luxuriance of the Venetian school, he harked back to the ideals of the early Florentine creators of the music drama; giving, like them, predominance to the literary text, and modelling his recitatives on the half-sung style of declamation in which the actors at the Comédie Française recited the dramas of Corneille and

Racine. To please his public, Lully also made considerable use of the popular ballet. He thus created an operatic style which long remained the standard to which French opera was expected to conform.

The Italian opera, however, still had its adherents. Having already conquered Germany, it was gaining ground in France at the time of Lully's death in 1687. Lully's works continued to be regarded as the only worthy examples of French opera until, some fifty years later, Rameau was recognized as his successor. But, so hostile were the champions of French music to any noticeable melodic element in opera, that the richer musical quality of Rameau's music caused him at first to be regarded with suspicion, as un-French. The names of Lully and Rameau had, however, come to be bracketed together as the chief representatives of French opera by the mid-eighteenth century. At that period, French music found its prestige threatened by the superior fascinations of a new Italian type, the Neapolitan comic opera, known as the *Opera Buffa*, recently created by Logroscino and Pergolesi, and already very popular in Italy.

A performance of Pergolesi's *La Serva Padrona*, given by an Italian opera company in 1752, took Paris by storm. A welcome contrast to the pompous, artificial style of grand opera, Pergolesi's *Intermezzo*—with its realistic bourgeois background, its humorous dialogue and sparkling music—appealed strongly also to those apostles of simplicity, Rousseau and Grimm; though other members of the "Encyclopédiste" group remained faithful to French opera. Paris was soon divided into two camps and a violent operatic war broke out, to be known later as "la Guerre des Bouffons." At the opera, the Lully-Rameau party, which had the support of Louis the Fifteenth and Madame de Pompadour, took up its position below the king's box; while the adherents of the Italian, or Bouffon, party, grouped themselves near the queen's box. The literary men on both sides indulged in bitter attacks on their adversaries. Ridiculing the frequent use of the ballet in French opera, Grimm formulated his famous definition: "l'Opéra français est un spectacle où tout le bonheur et tout le malheur des personnages consiste à voir danser autour d'eux." After two years of conflict, the Italian *Opera Buffa* company was forced to leave Paris. But the influence of this more natural musical style remained; and Pergolesi's charming *Intermezzo* inspired a new form, the "Opéra Comique," which French composers of the next generation created.

The fundamental antipathy that existed between French and Italian æsthetic ideals led to further disputes. Another quarrel broke out twenty years later (in 1774) when Gluck introduced his "reformed" Italian opera to the French public. Since his ideals were similar to those of Lully, Gluck had hoped that his operas, which he described as "tragedies set to music," would meet with general appreciation in Paris. He had an influential patron in Marie Antoinette, who had formerly been his pupil in Vienna; and he was also welcomed by the intellectuals, Rousseau, Grimm and Voltaire, who saw in him the exponent of their own artistic theories. An anti-Gluck party was, however, soon formed by the partisans of traditional Italian opera, and

when shortly afterwards the Neapolitan composer, Piccinni, came to Paris, he was hailed as a worthy opponent for Gluck. Although there was no personal animosity whatever between the two musicians, they found themselves pitted against each other, Gluck as the champion of the French style, Piccinni of the Italian. Both composers wrote successful operas during the following two years, but the overwhelming triumph of Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride*, definitely established his superiority. So strong was the feeling between the two parties, that they kept up the operatic war even after Gluck's departure for Vienna, a fresh opponent for Piccinni being found in Gluck's disciple, Salieri.

Later on, in the *opéra comique*, French composers were to develop a distinctive operatic style of their own; but, even in this form, some Italian elements survived. The influence of Pergolesi and of Piccinni is apparent in the music of the famous Belgian, Grétry, who studied for seven years in Italy; and the works of the other celebrated composers of *opéra comique*: Monsigny, Boildieu, Auber and Halévy, show a certain kinship with Italian *opera buffa*.

French hostility to Italian music was practically limited to opera. From the seventeenth century onwards, Italian vocal and instrumental music had met with great appreciation in Paris, where it was introduced by French musicians who had studied in Italy. One of the first agents of Italian influence was Carissimi's pupil, Marc-Antoine Charpentier. On his return from Rome, he produced several of his master's *oratorios*, which French audiences received with enthusiasm. As court musician and choir-master of the Sainte Chapelle, Charpentier also made the Italian *motet* and *cantata* known to his compatriots, and both forms were adopted by many French composers of the late seventeenth century.

At the private concerts which were so fashionable in Paris in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Italian music held a place of honour. The popularity of Italian vocal music is evident from the fact that Parisian publishers printed several collections of airs by Caldara, Gasparini, Steffani, Bononcini and Alessandro Scarlatti. Italian celebrities appeared at the bi-weekly concerts which were held either at the Louvre or the Tuileries during the reign of Louis the Fifteenth; the famous prima donna, Cuzzoni, often sang there, and among the favourite instrumentalists were Corelli's pupils, the Frenchman, Anet, and the Piedmontese, Somis. Through them the Italian violin forms became known in France, notably the violin sonata which was to inspire many French composers.

The great clavecinist, Couperin, who created such a characteristic French style, acknowledged that he had sought in his youth to imitate the manner of "Signor Corelli, whose works," he declared, "I shall admire as long as I live." Such was the prestige of Italian music in Paris at that time, that when Couperin played his first *Sonates en Trio* at a Paris concert, he thought it advisable to give his name an Italian aspect; and he says, "my italianized name won me great applause."

Sacred concerts were also organized in some of the Paris churches from

he end of the seventeenth century onwards, the most famous being those given weekly by the Abbé Mathieu at the Church of St. André des Arts. There, too, Italian music predominated; the programmes consisted chiefly of *cantatas* and other religious music by Cavalli, Carissimi, Legrenzi, Stradella and Bononcini.

This vogue of Italian music in France during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had inevitable repercussions on the works of contemporary French composers. Yet, even then, native musicians were creating that characteristic style which was to be a source of inspiration to their modern descendants when, at the close of last century, they sought to free French music from the preponderating influence of German art.

CHAPTER III

ITALIAN MUSIC IN ENGLAND, SPAIN AND RUSSIA

THE introduction of Italian opera to London, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, led to a series of conflicts similar to the Paris operatic quarrels. London society was soon divided into two hostile parties; one supported Italian opera, while the other urged the foundation of a national opera.

Italian music had, however, penetrated to England long before this time. Like all the European countries that had played an important political rôle in the sixteenth century, Tudor England, in close touch with Continental culture, was familiar with the Italian music of that period. The first musical immigrant of note was one Alfonso Ferrabosco of Bologna, singer and composer of madrigals and virginal music, who came to England about the year 1560 and entered the service of Queen Elizabeth. During the sixteen years he spent at the English court, "Master Alfonso" became an intimate friend of Byrd; and the great sixteenth century English composer is supposed to have acquired from his Italian friend the knowledge of contemporary Italian developments which he evidently possessed. Some years after leaving England, Ferrabosco, having obtained a position at the court of Savoy, sent for his two children whom he had left in London in the charge of a Dutch musician; but Elizabeth, wroth no doubt at Master Alfonso's desertion, refused to let them go.

One of Ferrabosco's sons, another Alfonso, became a well-known composer and player of the *viola da gamba* at the court of James the First. His *Book of Ayres* contains several songs which he wrote for Ben Jonson's Masques—a type of performance combining music and poetry which preceded the opera in England.

Polyphonic vocal music, which had been cultivated in England from mediæval days, came in the course of time under the influence of the fifteenth century Netherland school and, subsequently, of the sixteenth century Italian polyphonists. That favourite form in Renaissance Italy, the secular madrigal, provided many early English composers with their happiest inspiration. Like their Continental contemporaries, the Elizabethan musicians followed with interest the Italian developments of that period. John Dowland,[1] the famous lutenist and song composer, went to Italy, at the end of the sixteenth century with the intention of studying with Luca Marenzio, the Roman *madrigal* composer. In a letter written to Sir Robert Cecil in 1595, he says: "I had a great desire to see Italy and came to Venice and thence to Florence where I played before the Duke (of Tuscany) and

[1] Dowland, or Dolan, was probably born at Dalkey, Co. Dublin.

got great favours." In Venice, Dowland made the acquaintance of Giovanni Croce, the madrigal composer and one of the principal musicians at San Marco. From Florence, he was to have gone on to Luca Marenzio with whom he had been in correspondence. But, fearing that a sojourn in Rome might jeopardize his chances of a position at the court of Elizabeth, he gave up the project.

That epoch-making event in the history of music, the creation of the opera in Italy, had repercussions in England. During the last quarter of the seventeenth century, just when Lully had fixed the plan of French opera, Henry Purcell, a composer of genuine talent, developed the English masque on broader, more operatic lines. Purcell's numerous works, in particular his *Dido and Eneas*, contain much fine music and, in their general style, show points of resemblance with the operas of contemporary Italians. For Purcell did not aim at creating an English National Opera; he probably shared the ideas of Dryden, with whom he occasionally collaborated, and who held that operas should be modelled on the Italian plan. In the preface to his dramatic poem, *Albion and Albanus*,[1] the poet expresses this opinion as follows: "the first inventors of any art or science, provided they have brought it to perfection, are, in reason, to give laws to it, and according to their model, all after-undertakers are to build . . . Whosoever undertakes the writing of an opera," he adds, "is obliged to imitate the design of the Italians, who have not only invented, but brought to perfection, this sort of dramatic musical entertainment."

As England produced no worthy successor to Purcell, this first attempt at English opera ended abruptly when he died towards the close of the seventeenth century. But Purcell's works had given the public a taste for music drama. The result was that, early in the following century, two Italian companies came to London and established themselves in the Drury Lane and Haymarket Theatres. Addison tried in vain to stem the foreign invasion by launching another experiment in English opera: his drama *Rosamunde*, which was set to music by a London composer, named Clayton; but the poorness of Clayton's music doomed the scheme to failure, and the brilliant foreign productions triumphed.

Italian operas, sung in the Italian language, now became so popular, that Handel—recently returned from Italy and installed as music director at Hanover—determined to try his fortunes in London. His *Rinaldo*, an opera purely Italian in style, which he produced in 1711, proved a great success. Realizing that London, a practically unexploited operatic field, offered him exceptional opportunities, Handel decided to abandon his post at Hanover and settle in England. In the course of thirty years, during which he remained the principal figure in the London operatic world, he produced over forty operas, similar in style, but inferior in quality, to those of Alessandro Scarlatti.

Although Handel's music, which he cleverly adapted to the taste of

[1] This poem was set to music by the French composer, Grabu, who went to London with Cambert when the latter had been supplanted in Paris by Lully.

his English patrons, was generally appreciated in England, he had a hard struggle to maintain his position as the leading musician in London. His overbearing manner made him many personal enemies, and they, in revenge, supported his Italian rivals, Bononcini, Ariosti and Porpora. He had also to defend himself against the attacks of the champions of the English music drama who, on national grounds, objected to Handel's Italian operas. His principal adversary was Bononcini. Coming to London fresh from his triumphs at the Viennese court, Bononcini immediately gained the patronage of an influential group of the English aristocracy that was hostile to Handel. The conflict between the two parties lasted from 1720 to 1727. Handel, who had the King on his side,[1] eventually triumphed.

No sooner had Bononcini departed, than a new opposition was organized against Handel by the national opera party. This group, headed by the Prince of Wales, gave their enthusiastic support to the production of Gay's *Beggar's Opera*, at the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre. The *Beggar's Opera* offered a complete contrast to the fashionable conventional opera. Its action depicted the lives of London criminals; its text was in English; and the music consisted of popular melodies. This novel parody of Italian opera soon became the rage, and Handel's operatic ventures suffered a temporary eclipse; but he came into favour again when society had tired of Gay's satire.

Handel had next to face the competition of a rival Italian company which his enemies established at the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre, with the famous Neapolitan composer, Porpora, as director. But, although Porpora's company included his own celebrated pupil, Farinelli, as well as several great singers with whom Handel had quarrelled, his operas failed to please the London public. Abandoning the unequal contest, Porpora retired to Venice, that paradise of eighteenth century opera composers; while Handel, whose artistic victory had left him financially ruined, soon afterwards abandoned the operatic stage and devoted himself henceforward almost entirely to *oratorio*. Thereupon, the Venetian, Galuppi, came to London; and, gaining the favour of all parties, he succeeded in firmly establishing Italian opera there. By then, it had conquered the whole of Europe.

The form of sacred music on which Handel now concentrated was to become a formidable rival to opera in England. His own operas were soon overshadowed by the beauty of his *oratorios*: those impressive structures which he built up on the slight framework Carissimi had planned a century earlier. Although Handel intensified the Italian element in these works by borrowing melodies from Carissimi, Alessandro Scarlatti, Pergolesi and other Italians; and although they bear the stamp of his own intensely German mentality; yet, with these *oratorios*—written to English words, in a musical style deliberately adapted to the English taste—he created a form

[1] The story of the clever manner in which Handel propitiated his former patron, the Elector of Hanover, on his becoming George the First of England, is well known. Won over by Handel's *Water Music* serenade on the Thames, the King became Handel's staunch supporter.

that has come to be regarded as characteristically English; a phenomenon that has its parallel in the foundation of the French School of Opera by the Italian, Lully.

The various forms of Italian chamber music were also brought to London; each new type was imported in its turn. Most of the eighteenth century violin virtuosi visited England on their tours; among them, Gemigniani, who met with such success that he settled in London. Later on, he went to Dublin where he lived for several years, dying there in 1762.

The piano school established in London, in the late eighteenth century, by the Roman, Muzio Clementi, achieved great renown. Clementi, who had been brought to England as a boy and educated there by a music-loving patron, made London the centre of his professional activities. His innovations in piano technique and style, which were spread by himself and his pupils all over Europe, influenced the composers of other nations, especially the Germans, then beginning to build up the piano literature which was to assume such a remarkable development during the nineteenth century.

Italian opera, pursuing its triumphant progress, established itself in Madrid, Barcelona, Lisbon, Copenhagen, St. Petersburg, Moscow; and opera companies, recruited from the Italian schools of singing, which continued to pour forth an astonishing number of virtuosi, made the favourite Venetian and Neapolitan operas known all over Europe.

In many cities, the vogue for Italian opera was but a passing fashion and left few permanent traces. Yet, the circumstances connected with Italy's phenomenal musical prestige in foreign countries are worth recording, especially her conquests in countries like Spain and Russia which—situated outside the main currents of European culture—had hitherto preserved a marked artistic individuality.

Spain long remained immune from foreign musical influence. From medieval times, distinctive types of church and folk music had been cultivated in various parts of the Peninsula; as we have seen, they influenced the early music of Naples when that kingdom became an appanage of the crowns of Aragon and Castile. During the following centuries, while Italy was establishing her musical sway over her near neighbours, Spain had continued to evolve an art of her own until, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, a sudden invasion of Venetian opera temporarily overwhelmed native Spanish art.

The importation of Italian opera to Spain was an indirect result of Louis the Fourteenth's political policy. After his grandson, the Duke of Anjou, had become King Philip the Fifth of Spain, in 1700, Spanish court life became pervaded with a French atmosphere. Under the foreign influence, Spanish society developed an anti-national spirit and a contempt for native art. And since Italian opera flourished at that period in the other great European States, its introduction to Spain was inevitable. It took root there so firmly, that twenty years after Philip's accession, a new Italian opera

house was opened in Madrid. The management was entrusted to Marchese Scotti—an Italian who had originally come to Spain as the Duke of Parma's Envoy, to arrange the marriage of his daughter, Elisabetta Farnese, to Philip the Fifth. For the entertainment of the Spanish court, the Marquis organized sumptuous performances of Cesti's spectacular works. Meanwhile, another Italian opera company established itself in Barcelona and produced there with great success the operas of the contemporary Venetian composers, Pollarolo and Caldara. So completely did the foreign music impose itself in Castille and Catalonia, that, as had happened in other countries, native composers were forced to imitate the Venetians in order to gain a hearing.

The demand for Italian music at the Spanish court caused two of the most significant Italian instrumental composers of the eighteenth century to settle in Madrid. It was there that Domenico Scarlatti wrote his famous harpsichord works, the style of which was to influence Spanish composers down to our day. A generation later, he had a worthy successor in Boccherini, whose importance in the evolution of chamber music is now being tardily recognized.

Domenico Scarlatti did not take any active part in the organization of opera in Madrid, but it was during his long residence there as court musician that Italian opera achieved its greatest successes. This was due to the activities of the celebrated Neapolitan singer, Farinelli, whose connection with the court of Madrid forms one of the many curious chapters in the history of Italian opera.

In 1736, Farinelli—on his way to London, where he was engaged to sing at the Italian Opera under Porpora's direction—paid a flying visit to Madrid. An atmosphere of gloom hung over the Spanish court at that time, for Philip the Fifth was then frequently a prey to the fits of depression which ended in insanity. The Queen, Elisabetta Farnese, hoping that Farinelli's singing might interest the King sufficiently to rouse him from his apathy, arranged for him to hear the singer—as it were accidentally. The unexpected revelation of that marvellous voice, which the artist controlled like a perfect instrument, had such a beneficial effect on Philip's mental state, that Farinelli was entreated, in fact persuaded, to remain permanently in Madrid as court musician. But even the huge salary that tempted the singer to accept may not have compensated him for the monotony of his principal duty, which consisted in singing the King's four favourite *arias* for him every night till his death ten years later.

Farinelli's artistic and social talents soon made him indispensable to his royal patrons and he became all-powerful at court. His prestige grew even greater during the reign of Philip's successor, his brother, Ferdinand the Sixth who, afflicted with the same mental disease, found like Philip great relief in music. Fortunately for Farinelli, the new King's musical interests were less limited; the singer was permitted to reorganize the opera and to engage famous singers; and the Madrid Italian opera flourished greatly under his management.

The influence of Farinelli, the royal favourite, remained paramount even

in the domain of diplomacy until the accession of Philip's son, Charles the Third, in 1759, when Farinelli's opposition to the new King's foreign policy brought his long Spanish career to an end. Exiled from Spain, he retired to Italy where the great wealth he had amassed enabled him to live in splendour for the remainder of his days.

In spite of the sixty years' vogue of Italian opera and the importance it had assumed in the musical life of Madrid during Farinelli's day, it decayed rapidly on his departure. Native composers were not attracted by this form. The reign of Italian opera in Spain was consequently ephemeral and had little influence on the schools of Spanish and Catalan music which have developed recently on such original lines.

In Russia, as in Spain, the importation of Italian opera was preceded by a vigorous growth of native folk music, later on to form the basis of a modern Russian art music in which few Italian elements eventually survived.

It was only in the third decade of the eighteenth century, that Italian opera was brought to Russia for the first time by an enterprising travelling company. Twenty years later, under the patronage of the Czarina Elizabeth, permanent opera companies were established in St. Petersburg and Moscow by Locatelli, who had previously been engaged at the Dresden and Hamburg Opera Houses. The experiment proved so successful that Italian composers and singers soon flocked to Russia.

Italian opera flourished exceedingly in St. Petersburg during the reign of Catherine the Great. This Empress, being determined to raise the cultural standards at her court, invited some of the most celebrated Italian composers of the late eighteenth century to Russia; and, in order to make sure that her courtiers should profit by the musical advantages she provided, she made attendance at the Opera compulsory. The first famous Italian she engaged was the Venetian, Galuppi, who remained in St. Petersburg from 1765 to 1768, the Czarina having induced the Venetian Senate to give him three years leave of absence during which he retained his post as choir director at San Marco. Later, she sent for some noted representatives of the Neapolitan school; Paisiello, whom she kept at her court for ten years, was succeeded by Sarti and Cimarosa. Catherine spent huge sums on the productions, and took such a keen personal interest in opera that, like Frederick the Great, she collaborated in writing some of the *libretti*. After her death, Italian opera lost ground in St. Petersburg, and eventually, the operas of Gluck and Mozart supplanted the works of the older Italian school.

Many violin virtuosi visited Russia in the late eighteenth century, among them, Pugnani and Viotti; while Clementi's piano music was introduced there by his pupil, Field of Dublin, who lived for so many years in St. Petersburg and Moscow, that he became known as the "Russian" Field.

A certain Italian influence survived in the music of the earliest Russian composers. Thus, the operas of Glinka, that pioneer of the national school, show affinity with the works of Bellini and Donizetti, which delighted the

Russian composer when he heard them in Milan in 1830. In the music of Tchaikovsky, the Italian and German influences mingle. Eventually, however, the native genius found its true mode of expression, and evolved a distinctive type of modern Russian music.

In Russia, as elsewhere, Italy played the valuable rôle of inspirer: she gave the initial impulse which awoke in other countries the desire for individual musical expression.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

ITALY'S long supremacy in music ended with the eighteenth century. After hundreds of years of intense activity, the hitherto seemingly unquenchable flame of native inspiration began, at last, to burn dim. Represented henceforth by a few isolated composers, who concentrated their genius on opera, Italy was unable to maintain her dominion against Germany, whose vigorous young art swept all before it in the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Yet, in spite of Germany's triumph, the age-old prestige of Italy died hard. Musicians, accustomed for many generations to accept her standards and verdict, long continued to seek her approval, considering that the seal of success had been set upon their works, only when they had been acclaimed by Italian audiences. And even when her musical renown had been eclipsed by Germany, Italy, as the ancient home of art and culture, still wielded a subtle sway over all artists.

The early Italian composers who had brought their country such glory were all but forgotten when, towards the end of last century, Italy, reacting in common with the other musical nations against the insipidity of an outworn romanticism, became interested once more in her classical music. After zealous research, libraries and museums yielded up long buried treasures.

The first important revival occurred in the domain of church music. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the magnificent *a cappella* works of Palestrina found their way again into the repertoires of the Roman choirs, to spread thence all over the world; until Palestrina's name acquired an even greater fame and glory than that "Prince of Music" reaped during his lifetime.

The growing cult for old music, in which modern composers found fresh sources of inspiration, led to the resurrection of the works of the Gabrieli, of Frescobaldi, Monteverdi, Carissimi, Corelli and the Scarlatti. Modern audiences have had opportunities of hearing some of their music at the festivals and concerts organized in recent times at Venice, Cremona, Florence, Rome and other towns, with a view to restoring the status of the great Italian music centres of long ago.

Modern Italy, proud of her glorious record in the past, ambitious to regain her artistic prestige, revives the forgotten masterpieces of her Golden Age, and provides scope for the talents of her present day composers. Whether she can recapture her pre-eminence in the sphere of music, the future alone can tell. But a land so imbued with the spirit of beauty, whose history is so closely linked with the great creative movements of mediæval and Renaissance days, must remain an artistic influence for all time.

It was not the fading echoes of Italy's classical music that drew the revolutionary Wagner so irresistibly to Venice, Milan, Naples; but that magic atmosphere, emanating from the very landscape, from the picturesque shapes and colours of old Italian cities and townlets, which thrills and inspires the artist. To the fourteenth century Florentine architect, Leone Battista Alberti, the medieval churches of Rimini suggested an exquisite music—"tutta quella musica"—whose perfect harmony would be marred by the slightest change. And Wagner saw in the ethereal beauty of silent, moonlit Venice, "the world of sounds made visible."

THE END

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